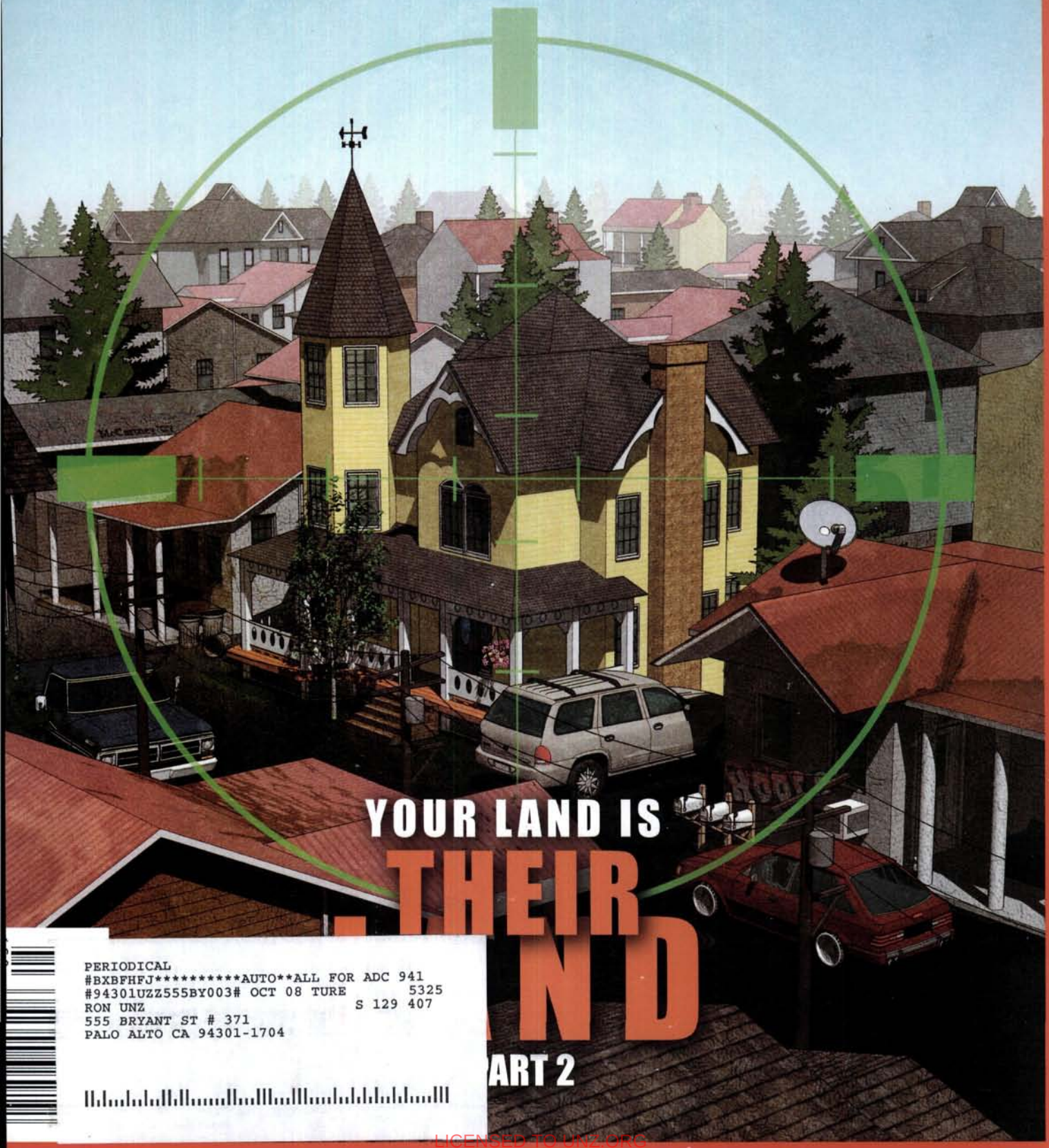
Chronicles

May 2007 A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE $3.95



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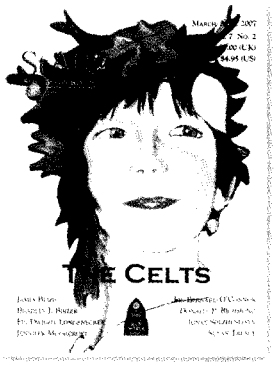

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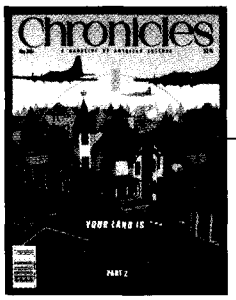

Chronicles

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Inside illustrations by Melanie Anderson and Nicholas Garrie.

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EDITOR
Thomas Fleming

EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Scott P. Richert

SENIOR EDITOR, BOOKS
Chilton Williamson, Jr.

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Aaron D. Wolf

DESIGNER
Melanie Anderson

INTERIOR ARTIST
George McCartney, Jr.

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
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POETRY EDITOR
Catharine Savage Brosman

RELIGION EDITOR
Harold O.J. Brown

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Cindy Link

PUBLISHER
The Rockford Institute

A publication of The Rockford Institute.
Editorial and Advertising Offices:
928 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103.
Website: *www.chroniclesmagazine.org*
Editorial Phone: (815) 964-5054.
Advertising Phone: (815) 964-5813.
Subscription Department: P.O. Box 800,
Mount Morris, IL 61054. Call 1-800-877-5459.

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Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture
(ISSN 0887-5731) is published monthly for $39.99 (foreign subscriptions add $12 for surface delivery, $48 for Air Mail) per year by The Rockford Institute, 928 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103-7061. Preferred periodical postage paid at Rockford, IL and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Chronicles, P.O. Box 800, Mount Morris, IL 61054.

The views expressed in *Chronicles* are the authors' alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Rockford Institute or of its directors. Unsolicited manuscripts cannot be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Chronicles
Vol. 31, No. 5 May 2007
Printed in the United States of America

POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

On Saving Ireland

In his "Letter From Cork" ("The Polonization of Ireland," *Correspondence*, March), Christie Davies hopefully predicts that recent Polish immigrants will reevangelize postmodern Ireland. From his lips to God's ears, although I doubt that the Almighty will be listening. I, in turn, predict (but do not hope) that what is now a sizable Polish community will be quickly and thoroughly assimilated into the mores of hedonistic modern Ireland. Think of it as a sociological counterpart to Gresham's Law—bad social behavior and morality driving out good social behavior and morality. I base this judgment on my experience as a frequent visitor to Ireland who enjoys dual American-Irish citizenship (thanks to the late Rabbi Meir Kahane's ground-breaking lawsuit, which permitted this abomination).

You have to go to Ireland to appreciate the smugness of the population that is enjoying their Panglossian fantasies that everything is just hunky-dory, while paying no attention to the demographic, cultural, and moral depravities taking place before their very eyes. I am afraid that the newly arrived Poles will quickly become an integral component of the ongoing depravity. Hedonism is fun. As newly minted members of the Me/Materialist Generation, the native-born Irish will attest to it!

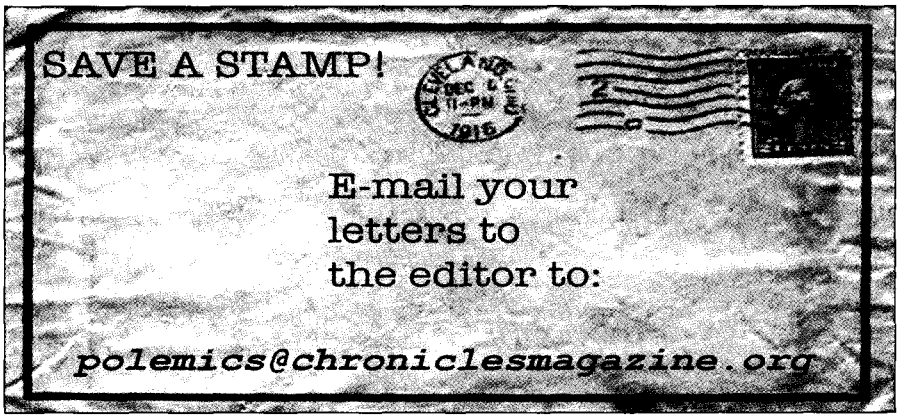
—Dan Hayes
Rego Park, NY

Dr. Davies Replies:

It seems to me quite possible that Dan Hayes is right. In my book *The Strange Death of Moral Britain*, I considered in detail the possibility that the hedonism that has long since overtaken Britain was spreading even faster in today's Ireland. A change that, in Britain, took 40 years has happened in Ireland in half that time, but no one who knew the old Catholic Ireland would have predicted it; I certainly did not. In 1962, Britain and the Republic of Ireland were very different countries; now, they share the same superficial hedonistic world. The irony of the new accord between the Protestants and the Catholics in Northern Ireland is that it is but a prelude to the drastic secularization of the province, the kind of secularization that has already overwhelmed both the countries to which the two religious factions owe their separate allegiances. It will be the peace of the faithless, in which people cease to fight about religion because it has ceased to be important to them. For a time, the Poles of Ireland, in their continued zeal, will stand out as different, but those who came to Britain during World War II are already absorbed into secular hedonism. Only the Muslims stand apart from these changes, and this will be the source of their power in a secular Europe.

On Winning the War

In the March issue, Ted Galen Carpenter makes a strong case for why we should "Reject False Prophets" who have led us into war in Iraq (*View*). He lays it all out starkly and succinctly: "Iraq has never come close to being a war for America's survival. Even the connection of the Iraq mission to the larger war against Islamic terrorism was always tenuous, at best." Again, "Saddam Hussein was a



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secular tyrant, not an Islamic radical." And "Iraq was an elective war—a war of choice . . . It is well past time to demand that the hawks be specific about their strategy." I agree.

When the true believers insist that "we can win" this war, the immediate response that springs to my mind is, "Define *win*." What is the objective, and how do we know when we've met it? Why should we want to referee a fight between Sunni and Shiite?

Adopting a child is a big responsibility. Once you do it, your life is not your own in the same way that it was previously. Why should we want to adopt Iraq? We as a nation have a life of our own to live, and that does not leave room for wet-nursing this unwanted offspring.

And we have a war against militant Muslims to fight—a real war, which we should be fighting in Afghanistan, in Waziristan, against *madrassas* and terrorist training camps.

I'm not against *that* war—we have it, whether we want it or not. But we have done all we can do in Iraq. From now on, we have to let them sort out their problems among themselves. We could withdraw our troops to the Kurdish region and protect them: They're the only ones who want us there, anyway. However, the present blank check we are giving to Iraq, which forces our soldiers (male and female) to be little more than sitting ducks, must be withdrawn.

—Larry Eubank
Bloomington, IN

Dr. Carpenter Replies:

Mr. Eubank makes a number of valid points. He is especially correct that we need to redirect our military focus to Afghanistan and western Pakistan, which are still the principal safe havens for Al Qaeda and its Taliban allies. As I pointed out in the August 2006 issue of *Chronicles*, the security environment in Afghanistan is becoming almost as dire as it is in Iraq. If the Bush administration is not careful, it will soon be credited with two failed wars on its watch.

Mr. Eubank is also correct that we have done as much as we can reasonably be expected to do in Iraq. The United States removed Iraq's long-standing dictator, supervised the creation of a new constitution, presided over the election of a new government, and trained new military and police forces. It should now be squarely up to the Iraqis to decide whether they want to live together in one country, making the political compromises necessary for such coexistence to take place, or whether they are going to let their simmering civil war become a full-scale bloodbath. If they opt for the latter, there is little we can do to stop it short of occupying the country with a very large force (at least 400,000 to 500,000 troops) for decades. No rational American would choose to have our country bear such a burden.

I do disagree with Mr. Eubank about the wisdom of maintaining a troop presence in the Kurdish region (really, the *de facto* independent republic of Kurdistan). Although that would be safer than continuing to patrol such garden spots as Baghdad and Fallujah, it could still result in undesirable entanglements for the United States. Kurdistan's relations with the rest of Iraq are problematic, at best (especially given the unresolved status of Kirkuk and its oil riches), and its relations with Turkey, Iran, and Syria could be turbulent as well. The United States should have no desire to be caught in the middle of such quarrels. America needs to get out of Iraq—and that means all of Iraq, including Kurdistan.

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by R. Cort Kirkwood

Still Sorry After All These Years

With all the mud spattered on the Confederate Battle Flag of late, you knew it wouldn't be long before Ol' Virginny scrubbed up for Jamestown's 400th anniversary with a grandiloquent apology for slavery. And Georgia, New York, and other former colonies of the original 13 will soon join the state in the confessional tub and lather up with the ideological lye faster than you can say Jackie Robinson.

Some Virginians wondered why they should apologize for something that occurred before any of us, white or black, was born. "Get over it," Virginia Del. Frank D. Hargrove told blacks before the resolution passed the General Assembly in February, which only energized the apology's spear carriers and got them pounding the war drums.

The apology rage is another front in the culture war against the South, in particular, and American history, in general. The Southern Baptists gibbered an apology for slavery over a decade ago, and newspapers gabble contrition for their soporific coverage of the "civil-rights struggle." Never mind the old liberal mantra that only individuals, not groups, are responsible for wrongdoing: One group is the sum of all evils. The resolution is clear on that, and its startling rhetoric and risible leftist moonshine show just what its authors had in mind: perpetual guilt and atonement from whites; perpetual grievance for blacks. One likely goal of this apology, given the failed lawsuits filed against venerable corporations over their involvement with slavery 200 years ago, is the procurement of reparations. Another may well be the election of Barack Hussein Obama.

This Virginia resolution is an extraordinary and subtle ideological indictment not just of slavery but of the United States. "For many African Americans," it says, "the scars left behind are unbearable, haunting their psyches and clouding their vision of the future and of America's many attributes . . ." It also quotes President Bush's apology for slavery, in which he insisted that, "while physical slavery is dead, the legacy is alive." Indeed, the resolution continues, "The vestiges of slavery are ever before African American citizens." Their "psyche[s]" are "haunt[ed]" by both the "overt racism of hate groups" and the "subtle racism" they experience "when requesting health care, transacting business, buying a home, seeking quality public education and college admission, and enduring pretextual [*sic*] traffic stops and other indignities." Only official apologies, then, can "assuage" their "perpetual pain, distrust and bitterness."

"Poppycock" is about the only reply this ideological indictment deserves. Words such as "unbearable," "haunting," and "perpetual," as well as the fibs and hyperbole about "subtle racism" in housing, healthcare, and education, all lead to some inescapable observations and conclusions, the first of which is that an event that occurred 200 years ago cannot haunt a man today. This "perpetual pain, distrust and bitterness" is no more real than the "repressed memories" recovered in victims of "past abuse," who suddenly "remember" events suggested by headshrinkers.

Yet even an apology bereft of this ideological hokum would be silly, as some blacks are attesting. "I don't want or need an apology for slavery," writes Lyle V. Harris, a black editorialist for the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. Said a professor at historically black Clark Atlanta University, "I'm not sure the average [black] guy who works from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. is thinking about this."

He isn't thinking about it, of course, and neither are whites who know the politicians' game. Like Hargrove, they aren't sorry for anything except electing the politicians who assiduously assist professional race hustlers in attempting to make them feel guilty for something that happened in the 19th century. Whites are terrified, however. They know what awaits those who cross the Pettus Bridge of modern racial taboo by defending themselves and opposing the antiwhite *Zeitgeist*: a rubber-hosing with the *r*-word.

The overall effort exerted by proponents of the Virginia apology suggests a certain desperation: The race hustlers, you see, know their jig is up. No one, least of all young whites, wants to hear about segregation and Jim Crow today, for the same reason Hargrove thinks Virginia's groveling apology is ridiculous: None of them had anything to do with it. Millions of black Americans are members of the middle class, and others, such as Bill Cosby, Tiger Woods, Colin Powell, and, of course, Barack Obama, have reached the pinnacle of financial, social, and political success. This truth delegitimizes continued caterwauling about racism and discrimination, which is why the race hustlers need the apology. It is a Trojan horse. The real import of the resolution is not the apology *per se*, but its list of interminable and unforgivable grievances that are little more than an antiwhite bill of attainder.

Everyone, including its authors, knows the apology won't change anything. Slavery is unforgivable. Its "legacy" is "unbearable," "haunting," and "perpetual," much like Original Sin. All whites bear its stain; all blacks, its pain. But if Baptism removes the stain of Original Sin, surely the War Between the States, with some 600,000 dead, and 50 years of state and federal civil-rights legislation, should have expiated the sin of slavery. It didn't, of course, which is why we need another "apology." And the apology, in turn, reminds us why we need more race laws concerning jobs and college admissions and justifies all manner of pernicious discrimination and racial attacks against whites. All of this will further convince some whites, particularly average voters and politicians ignorant of history and uninterested in learning about it, that they bear the guilt for every crime in history since Cain killed Abel.

The *Los Angeles Times* has dubbed Barack Obama "The Magic Negro." He's a "non-threatening" black presidential candidate, the liberals say, for whom a white soccer mom can comfortably vote. As Sen. Joe Biden infamously said, "You got the first mainstream African-American who is articulate and bright and clean and a nice-looking guy. I mean, that's a storybook, man."

So whites can confess and apologize for the besetting sin of slavery. Then they can do penance by voting for Obama.

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MISSED OPPORTUNITY

Last November, South Dakota's pro-life community was a united force. Conditions had changed significantly by the end of February, when the effort to ban almost all abortions in the state suffered its second major defeat in less than four months, this time through the votes of eight state senators who killed a bill in committee that would have banned virtually all abortions, except those involving pregnancies conceived in rape or incest, or in cases in which carrying a child to term could seriously harm or kill the mother.

This time, members of the state's pro-life community were among those who helped to scuttle the bill.

The issue first came to a head during the 2006 legislative session, when South Dakota lawmakers passed a bill banning abortions, and Gov. Mike Rounds signed it into law. Abortion-rights groups responded by collecting enough signatures to force the issue onto the ballot that November. Polls correctly foretold the ban's demise. They also gave some pro-life advocates cause for hope: Fifty-six percent who opposed the ban said they would support a measure that included exceptions for rape, incest, and the life of the mother.

Thus, few doubted that pro-life lawmakers would try again when the state legislature convened in January. As the deadline neared for filing bills, copies of e-mails circulated through the capitol. Many were written by local religious leaders, urging lawmakers to push forward with a new bill, even if, because of the exceptions, such a bill could not be considered perfect. One e-mail, attributed to Bishop Paul Swain of the Catholic Diocese of Sioux Falls, argued that there is, in Catholic moral theology, a principle of gradualism that would permit a Catholic in good conscience to support and vote for a lesser ban with the intention of diminishing as much evil, and protecting as many lives, as possible.

The bill that emerged was complex. It required a rape victim to report the crime within 50 days. An abortion could not be performed later than 17 weeks after a victim's last menstrual period. The same requirement applied to incest victims.

Several key supporters of the 2006 ban were not on board. Some were upset by the exceptions. Had it been signed into law, the bill would almost certainly have eliminated the vast majority of the 800 abortions performed each year. But some found the idea of establishing a two-tier system on the value of life to be morally repugnant, even if it was politically expedient.

A far more common complaint had to do with timing. Those who support abortion argued that a thick cloud of abortion fatigue had settled over the state, so, they asked, why bring it up again? It was an argument that even some chiefs in the pro-life community made. Brock Greenfield, a state senator who heads South Dakota Right to Life, testified against the bill. He was joined at the podium that day by the state director of Planned Parenthood.

Backers attempted to counter the timing issue by amending the bill, adding a provision to refer it to voters in the 2008 general election. The move served two purposes: First, for those who said the debate should wait, it pushed the argument into the future. Second, if voters were to approve the measure in 2008, it would force pro-abortion groups into the position of having to mount a judicial challenge against a provision supported by the majority of voters.

After passing 45-25 in the South Dakota House of Representatives, the bill was killed by the Senate State Affairs Committee on an 8-1 vote.

When the first ban rolled through the legislature in 2006, pro-lifers hoped it would tear down *Roe* v. *Wade*. They were energized as they went to work defending the measure. Millions of dollars poured into their campaign. Many were hopeful that another vacancy would occur on the U.S. Supreme Court. But the referendum of November 2006 was a kick in the teeth. To make matters worse, after the November election, a few of the key legislative leaders who supported the ban lost their seats. At the national level, dreams of another conservative Supreme Court justice died as Republicans bungled their way to defeat.

Both sides agree that the debate over abortion will likely return to South Dakota. But after two major defeats, it seems clear that the pro-life community missed its best shot at ending abortion in the Mount Rushmore State.

—*Jonathan Ellis*

SHARIA COMES TO GERMANY

The husband routinely beat his 26-year-old German-born wife, the mother of their two young children, and threatened to kill her when the court ordered him to move out of their Hamburg apartment. Police were called repeatedly to intervene. The wife wanted a quick divorce—without waiting a year after separation, as mandated by German law—arguing that the abuse and death threats she suffered easily fulfilled the "hardship" criterion required for an accelerated decree.

Judge Christa Datz-Winter refused to grant one, however, arguing that the Koran allows a husband to beat his wife and that the couple's Moroccan origin must be taken into account in the case. They both come from a cultural milieu, Judge Datz-Winter wrote, in which it is common for husbands to beat their wives as sanctioned by the Koran. The husband's exercise of "the right to castigate" does not fulfill the hardship criterion of German federal law, and the wife's Western lifestyle may have given her husband grounds to claim that his honor had been compromised.

Turkish newspapers have added that the judge made specific reference to Sura 4 of the Koran, which contains the infamous verse 34: "Men have the authority over women because God has made the one superior to the other, and because they spend their wealth to maintain them. Good women are obedient. They guard their unseen parts because God has guarded them. As for those from whom you fear disobedience, admonish them and send them to beds apart and beat them."

The wife's lawyer, Barbara Becker-Rojczyk, was shocked that, in a German legal case, a German judge would invoke the Muslim holy book to assert that husbands can beat wives, but this was not the first time that German courts have used litigants' "cultural background" to inform their verdicts. Christa Stolle of Terre des Femmes, a women's rights group, points out that, in a number of cases involving questions of marital violence, the alleged perpetrator's culture of origin had been considered a "mitigating circumstance."

Judge Datz-Winter's invocation of Koranic law has far-reaching implications.

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There are some 25 million Muslims in Western Europe, and most of them already consider themselves members of an autonomous community of believers that is justifiably opposed to their decadent host society of infidels. In Britain, France, Benelux, and Scandinavia, they already demand the adoption of *sharia* within segregated Muslim communities, which their leaders believe to be a step in the direction toward the imposition of *sharia* on the host society as a whole.

Europe's elite class is ready to let them have it. As I wrote in these pages in December 2006 ("Eurabian Nights," *View*), Dutch Justice Minister Piet Hein Donner sees the introduction of *sharia* as perfectly legitimate, so long as it is done by democratic means: "the majority counts—that is the essence of democracy." The same "essence" was reiterated in similar terms by Jens Orback, the Swedish integration minister, who declared last July that "We must be open and tolerant towards Islam and Muslims because when we become a minority, they will be so towards us." Swedish courts are already introducing *sharia* into civil cases: A judge in the city of Halmestad ordered a Muslim man to pay *Mahr*—the Islamic dowry ordained by the Koran as part of the *sharia* marriage contract—to his Muslim wife whom he wanted to divorce.

Back home, the *New York Times* had a bone to pick with the German judge mainly because of her suggestion that Islam justified violence against women. "While the verse cited by Judge Datz-Winter does say husbands may beat their wives for being disobedient—an interpretation embraced by fundamentalists—mainstream Muslims have long rejected wife-beating as a medieval relic."

In reality, "mainstream Muslims" do nothing of the sort. Scholars at the most respected institution of Islamic learning, Cairo's Azhar University, are unambiguous: "If admonishing and sexual desertion fail to bring forth results and the woman is of a cold and stubborn type, the Qur'an bestows on man the right to straighten her out by way of punishment and beating, provided he does not break her bones nor shed blood. Many a wife belongs to this querulous type and requires this sort of punishment to bring her to her senses!"

Allah's commandment that every wife obey her husband *or else* is clarified by Muhammad's personal insights. When asked which woman is virtuous, he replied, "She who gives pleasure to her husband when he looks, obeys him when he bids, and who does not oppose him, fearing his displeasure." Muhammad mandated that a husband's needs must come first: "Give her food when you have taken your food, clothe her when you have clothed yourself, do not slap her on the face, nor revile her, nor leave her alone, except within the house." A man's sex drive has to be satisfied immediately: "When a man calls his wife to his bed, and she does not respond, the One Who is in the heaven is displeased with her until he is pleased with her."

Islam's treatment of women might be expected to make the "religion of peace" abhorrent within the cultural milieu of the equal-rights obsessed European Union and the neofeminist *New York Times*, but this has not happened. Islamic teaching on marriage and the family, though "conservative" on "patriarchy," is the very antithesis of the Christian concept of matrimony, which is based on love and inseparable partnership. Islam is therefore an "objective" ally of postmodernity—a few beatings here and a few rapes there, notwithstanding.

"I can only say, Good night, Germany," says Ronald Pofalla, the general secretary of Germany's ruling Christian Democratic Union, of Frau Datz-Winter's ruling. Unless the madness is checked, it will be good night to us all, well before this century is over.

—*Srdja Trifkovic*

NO EXCUSES FOR LIBBY

Apologists for Lewis "Scooter" Libby, the former chief of staff for Vice President Dick Cheney who was convicted in March of perjury and obstruction of justice, are relying on two lines of argument: that Libby was the Bush administration's "fall guy," and that Libby's problem was his faulty memory—the "busy-man defense."

It is true that Libby was only one of several administration officials who "leaked" CIA officer Valerie Plame Wilson's identity to the news media. The White House and the Office of the Vice President (OVP) leaked—actually, planted—her name and CIA affiliation well before former ambassador Joseph Wilson published his July 6, 2003, op-ed article, "What I Didn't Find in Africa."

Hiding behind the manufactured excuse that Wilson was insisting that "Cheney sent him" to Niger, White House staffers "corrected" several media figures, rapid-fire, by insisting that Wilson had been "sent" to Niger by his CIA wife to check out the purported Iraq-uranium deal.

Testimony and trial documents corroborate that, from June 13 to July 12, 2003, then-Deputy Secretary of State Richard L. Armitage passed this information to *Washington Post* assistant managing editor Bob Woodward and to columnist Robert Novak; Libby gave it to departing White House press secretary Ari Fleischer, who also heard it from White House staffer Dan Bartlett and, in turn, gave it to two other reporters, including NBC's David Gregory, who did not publish it. Libby also leaked it (exclusively) to *New York Times* reporter Judith Miller; and White House Chief of Staff Karl Rove passed it to *Time* reporter Matthew Cooper and confirmed it for Novak—who published it in his column of July 14, 2003. Other press contacts included *Washington Post* reporter Walter Pincus, NBC News's Andrea Mitchell, and CNBC's Chris Matthews—who told Wilson that Rove had called Mrs. Wilson "fair game." Overall, the White House-OVP action was so concerted that, even in hindsight, it is difficult to determine who fired the first shot or the fatal bullet.

Tense colloquies about the Wilsons and the Niger trip seem to have begun in late May 2003, when Libby asked Marc Grossman, an undersecretary in the State Department, about the Niger trip. The CIA faxed classified documents to the OVP on June 9, mentioning the trip without naming Wilson. The next day, a classified State Department memo named Valerie Wilson as Joseph Wilson's wife and "a CIA WMD manager" who was also debunking the Niger uranium story. The next day, Libby called longtime CIA official Robert L. Grenier, who told him that Mrs. Wilson was, indeed, in the CIA. The next day—June 12, 2003—Vice President Cheney also told Libby, in a phone call, about Mrs. Wilson.

The following day, June 13, Armitage told Woodward about Mrs. Wilson, using expletives, and, ten days later, Libby mentioned Mrs. Wilson's CIA employment to Judith Miller.

Did the Bush administration simply launch a preemptive strike against Joe Wilson, or did it also move to disrupt analysis in the CIA WMD counterproliferation unit? Either way, the White House moved fast: By the time Wilson's column appeared, his wife's name and

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CIA connection had already been leaked to Woodward and Miller for 23 and 13 days, respectively. (Incidentally, Armitage, a colleague of Cheney since the "Team B" days, was a signatory of the neoconservative Project for a New American Century, which had, since its founding in 1997, placed Iraq at the top of its hit list.)

That the Bush-administration officials may have made Libby their "fall guy" does not mitigate Libby's guilt. You don't get out of a ticket just because other drivers around you were speeding, too. And, since no one is suggesting that Libby planted information on his own (as a sort of "G. Gordon Libby"), wouldn't it benefit this country if those "fall guy" apologists would pressure the men who gave Libby his orders to come clean?

Certainly, Libby was in over his head. So were Cheney, Bush, Rumsfeld, Rice, and everyone else who was presuming to rearrange the Middle East. How could these individuals presume to invade and remake a country—actually, wreck and destroy it—without even admitting what they were doing? Yet Libby's position was unique. As Woodward wrote in his book *Plan of Attack*, Libby's "three formal titles"—chief of staff for Cheney; national-security advisor to Cheney; and assistant to Bush—made up "a trifecta of positions probably never before held by a single person." That someone engaged in sensitive strategy discussions for invading Iraq also served, in essence, as a Bush speechwriter may be an historical oddity. That, given his long list of duties, too much would land on his plate, making him a very busy man and pushing his memory to its limits, was inevitable.

The commentators who blame Libby's faulty memory are doing what Libby could have done for himself, had he taken the witness stand. Since he did not, and since only the defendant can speak to his own state of mind, his lawyers were not supposed to be allowed to use the "memory defense." (They still managed to get it into the record, however, as I witnessed at the trial.)

Memory is inherently variable and fallible; that is why senior government officials have ample support staff at their beck and call to help with notes, records, and communications. If apologists for the limitations of memory truly want to help their country, they should call for improved federal standards in rigorous and impeccable record keeping.

—*Margie Burns*

OBITER DICTA

Sasha Gusov's *Locusts*, mentioned in **Andrei Navrozov**'s February column, "The Art of Misanthropy," is in preparation. The book will contain an introductory essay by Navrozov and 1,000 photographs by Gusov. When the book is available, more information will be found at *www.gusov.com*.

Our poet this month is **Sara Hill**, whose verse makes its print debut with this number of *Chronicles*. Mrs. Hill writes from Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

Our cover art is provided by our interior artist, **George McCartney, Jr.** Mr. McCartney studied at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and received a bachelor's of art from the State University of New York at Geneseo. Since 1997, he has worked in various media in the fields of illustration, graphic design, and textiles. George currently resides in North Carolina with his wife, Kristin, and his son, William.

Our interior art is provided by **Melanie Anderson** and **Nicholas Garrie**. Mrs. Anderson, our designer, received her B.F.A. from Northern Illinois University. Mr. Garrie, who works in a variety of media, hails from Rockford.

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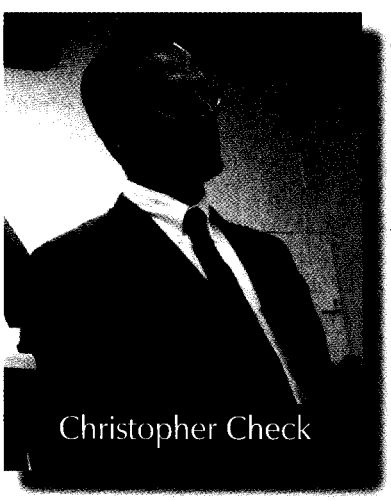
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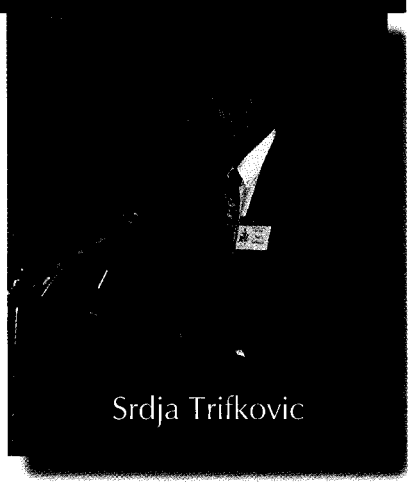
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by Thomas Fleming

Our Fathers' Fields

Conservatives in the 21st century lead subterranean lives, taking refuge in their obscurity and finding comfort only in the virtual memories of better times, memories all too often implanted from misleading books and films. Like aristocratic pagans in the afterglow of the Roman Empire, they are a despised minority who fight symbolic battles. In 382, the emperor Gratian ordered the removal of the pagan statue of Victory from the senate. Symmachus, an aristocratic pagan and urban prefect (in 384), petitioned for the return of the statue. The new emperor, Valentinian II, refused to see him, and his measure was strongly opposed by Ambrose, the equally aristocratic bishop of Milan, whose hauteur was bolstered by the conviction that he was right. Symmachus believed in Rome, but his gods were no better than morale-boosting fictions.

Like Symmachus, American conservatives can only demonstrate against the destruction of Confederate monuments or mount futile crusades for the restoration of the Ten Commandments on courthouse walls, whispering furtively that all the ills of modern life date from the removal of a pre-Christian moral code. If they really are Christians, I wonder why conservatives do not demonstrate in favor of putting up Christ's two Great Commandments, on which hang all the Law and the Prophets. But, marginalized by an anti-Christian revolution, conservatives believe so little in their God that they are unable to pass on their outworn creed to their children, whose minds are nourished on the thin poisons of FOX Television and the *Wall Street Journal*.

How far we have fallen, and how fast! Less than 60 years ago, some conservatives dared to hope that the American people might be induced to take a stand on the political principles of the Constitution, on economic liberty, on the cultural traditions of our ancestors, and on the Faith of our fathers. In *Ideas Have Consequences*, Richard Weaver thought the rallying point could be the right of private property, which he described as "the last metaphysical right." Today, so far from aspiring to any metaphysical rights, Americans would be content if their governments would only spell out the terms on which they may confiscate our property.

I have never entirely understood why Weaver used the expression "metaphysical right," unless he thought it a fine rhetorical flourish, which it is. In a deservedly celebrated passage, he argued that

> the right of private property is metaphysical because it does not depend on any test of social usefulness. . . . It is a self-justifying right, which until lately was not called upon to show in the forum how its "services" warranted its continuance in a state dedicated to collective well-being.

The phrase "collective well-being" reminds us that, in Weaver's day, the threat of communism was real, not only in the form of the bellicose Soviet Union and its rapidly growing empire, but also within the New Deal wing of the Democratic Party (with its liberal Republican allies) that was eagerly converting every last remnant of a free republic into a centralized state that reduced its citizens to servility. From our vantage point, we can see (as many of us saw 30 years ago) that communism *per se* offered less of a threat to our liberties than the revolutionary tradition that had spawned not only Marxist communism and gradualist socialism but the classical liberalism which, even in Weaver's day, was usurping the title of conservatism.

From Weaver's perspective, the greatest danger lay in the state's presumption that it could confiscate both income and property in the name of the public good. The Roosevelt administration had done both, by withholding federal income taxes from employees' salaries and by confiscating and flooding some 600,000 acres of private land in the upper South in the name of flood control. And the New Deal state was a republican minnow compared with the vast Leviathan, which, with its equally pernicious brood in our states and counties, wages offensive wars, imports and subsidizes illegal aliens, and provides abortions to teenage girls who will soon have to be vaccinated to protect them from the consequences of the sexual irresponsibility indoctrinated by the monster's schools.

Weaver deserves his reputation as a prophet, but his argument is historically shallow, and that shallowness is the result of his abstract and *a priori* approach to private property, which is, after all, not a metaphysical absolute but an attribute of historical man. Though every society, including communist states, has some concept of ownership, there is no such thing as a universal right to property that fits every historical circumstance, any more than there is one single (much less ideal) form of the family or social hierarchy or the marketplace. If we were to consider possession as a metaphysical abstraction, then we should also have to consider regulations on marriage and incest, theft and murder, as metaphysical abstractions, though such rules, in fact, vary from place to place and time to time. The Romans could consider marriage with your uncle's adopted daughter to be incest. We would see nothing wrong. In most societies, men cut or dress their hair to mark an important transition (maturity or the death of a relative), but no one, I think, would attribute a metaphysical status to barbering.

The word *metaphysics* is, in its most literal sense, nothing more than a reference to Aristotle's book that followed the *Physics* in the standard edition. As a more general term, it denotes that which transcends the natural universe. Metaphysics is, in other words, a theology not rooted in faith. What

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possible application could metaphysics have to a legal institution such as marriage or property except insofar as we believe them to be of divine institution? Christians are often blamed for introducing socialist ideas, but, despite the propaganda of leftist Christians, private property has always been defended by the Church. The brief and limited experiment in voluntary communalism described in the Acts of the Apostles quickly disappears except as a part of the discipline of monastic life, and, in the second century, Christians are boasting of how normal they are, as we read in the Epistle of "Mathetes" (the learner) to Diognetus:

> For the Christians are distinguished from other men neither by country, nor language, nor the customs which they observe. For they neither inhabit cities of their own, nor employ a peculiar form of speech, nor lead a life which is marked out by any singularity . . . and following the customs of the natives in respect to clothing, food, and the rest of their ordinary conduct, they display to us their wonderful and confessedly striking method of life . . . They obey the prescribed laws, and at the same time surpass the laws by their lives.

The burdens of communism and celibacy were reserved for men and women with a special vocation, though heretics and troublemakers have periodically called for revolutions in marriage and property.

In Genesis 1, the creation of man in the likeness of God is coupled with the dominion he has been given over the creatures of the earth. Saint Thomas cited this as proof of his contention that the natural creatures of the earth belong to man. Thomas' insightful connection of *dominion* (the Vulgate uses the verb *dominari*, "to have power over") with property may well have been helped by the fact that the noun *dominium* (literally, "authority over a household") was frequently used to mean legitimate ownership of property. Beyond that general statement, we are not permitted to go, and, when we pass those Pillars of Hercules, we are sure to meet with the monsters of political abstraction against which every sane political thinker, from Aristotle to Oakeshott, has warned us.

Eric Voegelin spoke of the danger of immanentizing the eschaton—that is, of the Gnostic aspiration to construct the Kingdom of God here on earth—but there is also a concomitant danger of eschatizing the immanent (that is, of treating human things, however noble and essential, as transcendent). Once conservatives decide to walk down that road, we shall be following in the footsteps of Robespierre, John Brown, and Pol Pot as we embark on our crusade to restore property rights or Roman law or the Tridentine Mass. Singing "Glory, glory, hallelujah," we shall cheerfully slaughter oppressors and oppressed, landowners and the landless, in an orgy of self-righteousness. The first person killed at Harpers Ferry was a free Negro, and hundreds of thousands of Southern blacks died during and after the war that liberated them only from life and security.

We have to deal with historical man, not the abstract man projected by libertarian economists, Marxist-Straussian theorists, or City-on-a-Hill religious fanatics. As conservatives or reactionaries, we must always be on guard against the presumption that we have all the answers. As a foe of communism and an ally of classical liberals, Richard Weaver quite correctly detected the stench of Marx in the phrase "collective well-being," but long before there were collectivists, people spoke of the commonweal or the *res publica* as the institutional foundation of our social life. It is simply not true that, historically considered, there is no connection between property rights and the common good. Even the briefest glance at feudal land tenure is enough to show that, in the Middle Ages, land was often—perhaps typically—held on a contingent basis. The possessor (often not, strictly speaking, the owner) had to perform services in exchange for his land and could not automatically pass it on to his heirs. Feudal property law is ultimately the source of the principle of eminent domain, by which the sovereign is the actual owner of the realm's land, which he may take back, as he sees fit, and devote to the public good.

Weaver deserves his reputation as a prophet, but his argument is historically shallow, and that shallowness is the result of his abstract approach to private property, which is not a metaphysical absolute but an attribute of historical man.

Ancient societies are more complex. While Greeks, Jews, and Romans tenaciously protected their property rights, these rights were held more often by a family than by an individual. In other words, they tended to be collective rather than individual, traditional rather than abstract. Today, we tend to think of property as an abstract bundle of rights and duties, whose most obvious characteristic is that it can be bought and sold. Ancient Athenians, however, would have found it difficult to sell the family homestead, thus dispossessing the heirs. In the Old Testament, a man driven by poverty to sell his property has the right to buy it back according to a formula, and every 50 years (that is, in a Jubilee Year), the property will revert to its original owner. Property and family, in other words, are interrelated, and the function of real property was to provide support and shelter for the kinfolk.

Those who attach too much significance to wealth, even in the form of property, more easily fall prey to covetousness. Nonetheless, as Aristotle was at some pains to show (in both the *Politics* and the *Ethics*), it is also dangerous to define man in exclusively spiritual terms. In a powerful argument, adopted later by Saint Thomas, Aristotle proves that property (unlike money) is natural because it serves the natural needs of the human race. Without a house, we are exposed to the elements; without land, we cannot feed ourselves and our family. While mere physical survival and comfort represent a very low form of the good, for most of us, they are the foundation from which we aim at higher things.

There is no imaginable human condition in which some form of property is not necessary. The most primitive peoples—*e.g.*, the Bushmen of the Kalahari—have private possessions. Because they have no fixed habitation, Bushman families do not own land, but their kin groups do exercise inherited

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privileges over certain useful locations, such as watering holes. At the other end of the social spectrum, Catholic and Orthodox monks give up private possessions, but the monastery or the order collectively owns lands and buildings and may even possess great wealth. Even communists retain a sense of property: The state, controlled by party leaders, theoretically owns everything. Milovan Djilas was shrewd enough to point out that communists eliminate every form of property but their own.

While there are no natural rights, there are natural necessities: providing for our natural existence (food, in particular); defending our existence (fighting and resisting aggression); continuing our existence beyond the grave (that is, by procreation). In each of these spheres, we have a duty to look out for us and ours, and, "whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of those ends," it is acting illegitimately. When, for example, the Third Reich murdered its citizens, and when Jacobins and communists seized food or food-producing land from farmers and peasants, they were behaving tyrannically. If private property is, as Aristotle and Saint Thomas have argued, a natural necessity, then governments that take property without justification are tyrannies.

Even though the possession of property fulfills natural necessities, it is not automatically a natural, much less a metaphysical, right. The mere fact that I need something does not necessarily mean that I have a right to it. If I set fire to my house and burn everything in it, I shall need shelter, food, and clothing, but do I have a right to take them from my neighbor (or from the insurance company or the taxpayers)? The human need for property cannot be converted into a right, because, in our world, that would inevitably imply a universal obligation to provide (through confiscation, agrarian laws) land to the landless. A natural right would end up meaning that everybody else on the planet has some claim on my property, whereas we all know that my property belongs to the bank and to the governments that can seize it for nonpayment of taxes.

If we defend property as an abstraction, we must either dissolve society into the war of all owners against all owners and nonowners alike, or else be content with the minimum property rights enjoyed by Bushmen or communist apparatchiks. The peculiar forms of property rights that evolved in the modern West, while they are not entirely satisfactory, are the basis not only of our political liberty but of our entire civilization. To weaken, much less eliminate, them will have disastrous consequences. Gibbon believed that the nomadic and warlike habits of the ancient Germans kept them in a state of cultural infancy. "The possession and the enjoyment of property are the pledges which bind a civilized people to an improved country."

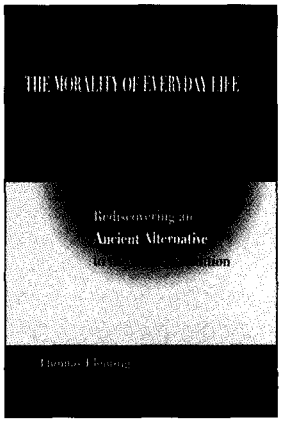
Gibbon was a pagan, who saw property as a strictly natural good. For the Christian, however, property can be both a temptation and an opportunity to do good. Saint Thomas quotes approvingly Saint Paul's admonition to the rich (in 1 Timothy) "That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." The Christian view of property, then, is neither capitalist nor communist; it is the antithesis of these and all other heretical *isms* that misjudge the nature and ends of human life. Property is a natural necessity, and the civil rights of the owner or possessor will be respected by any state that is not tyrannical, but we must beware of turning natural goods into idols to which we sacrifice at the cost of our souls. C

The Morality of Everyday Life:
Rediscovering an Ancient Alternative to the Liberal Tradition

by Thomas Fleming

What passes for conservatism today is really nothing more than the impossible moral and social theories of the Renaissance and Enlightenment, in which universal abstractions, such as democracy and equality, are presented as hard truths, when, in fact, they have never existed in any society in human history. Nonetheless, they are to be applied worldwide, at the tip of a spear (or cruise missile) if necessary.

Dr. Fleming's alternative is rooted in "everyday life," the local realities of blood and soil, custom and tradition, friendship and faith, and in the wisdom born of the experiences these realities beget. This wisdom finds expression in folktales and fables, in ancient Hebrew Scriptures and Greek philosophy, and in medieval casuistry. It is the method to solving ethical problems great and small, and it is the method that undergirds authentic conservatism.



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by Joseph Sobran

Was George Will Wrong?

If Rush Limbaugh can pass for a conservative these days, it's no marvel that George Will can, too. Unlike Limbaugh, he at least reads books, especially Victorian ones. (He even named his daughter Victoria.) But he shares with Limbaugh an easygoing approach to defining conservatism, to the extent that a tabloid tramp such as Rudy Giuliani makes Will's cut, while a far more principled man such as Rep. Ron Paul (one of the very few members of today's Congress who could converse about something other than the weather with James Madison) is faintly risible—at best, "a useful anachronism." Yes, this of one of the few who opposed invading Iraq from the start.

But then, Will would probably speak condescendingly of the Sermon on the Mount, and, as one wag has quipped, he "could bring an air of pomposity to a nudist colony, with or without his bow tie." He has announced that the Tenth Amendment is "as dead as a doornail," which may be true, although that is nothing to smirk about. The U.S. Constitution is related to today's U.S. government roughly as the Book of Revelation is related to the Unitarian Church, which is to say, rather tenuously; but, like the Devil citing Scripture, Will can use it when he wants to, as in hurling imprecations against McCain-Feingold limits on campaign spending. First Amendment, you know.

Will's style is simply to announce, as ineluctable facts, things principled conservatives don't like, with the unspoken counsel, "So, get over it, children." Franklin D. Roosevelt's legacy is "an ethic of common provision." Affirmative action means a "racial spoils system." As for reversing legal abortion, "the culture has moved on." Well, that's that! Will has always treated ordinary conservatives, such as pro-lifers, as disreputable poor relations.

To give him his due, Will has also been a staunch defender of the state of Israel and an unflinching critic—nay, an utterly fearless foe—of holocaust deniers. Sometimes suspected of plagiarism himself, he has flagged Thomas Aquinas for his "intellectual hijacking" of Aristotle. He has nailed the Catholic Church for antisemitism and Pius XII for his silence about the holocaust. He has also taken the side of the great Victorian scientist Charles Darwin against the benighted apostles of "intelligent design."

I first met George at *National Review* in 1972. I was a green editorial writer; he was our new Washington correspondent—smart and well informed, but cocky and priggish, the sort of impressive young man who, knowing how to wow his elders, only gets more precocious with age. I knew of his brilliant father, Frederick L. Will, from my philosophy studies. His grandfather was a Lutheran minister, and with this background, George somehow felt entitled to make snide but not original—in fact, trite—remarks about Saint Augustine. (Luther wouldn't have approved.)

Egotistical and opinionated without having a really independent mind, George was confident that he was among suckers and could get away with pretty much anything, including a bit of occasional minor plagiarism. And he did and does. Nobody told him to come off it. He quickly made his way as a Washington pundit, rising to the top of the tree in record time. A few critics have pointed out how derivative his views are, but he has never let this slow him down.

Washington is not a city to which would-be martyrs flock in large numbers, and I have never known George to take a position knowing that it would cost him anything. On the contrary, he has always had a shrewd sense of which side his bagel is buttered on. He was among the first in the punditry racket to perceive that neoconservatism could be more lucrative than actual, old-fashioned conservatism. He has been careful not to call himself a neoconservative, but he ran with the neocons rhetorically until they fell into disrepute a couple of years ago, at which point he scolded them as if he'd never known them. He now writes about the Iraq war as if he'd been warning against it from the start. Which is not quite the case.

In fact, in early 2003, George was applauding the other George for threatening to invade Iraq, using the full arsenal of Bush-Cheney-Rumsfeld-neocon rationales and slogans: "weapons of mass destruction," "regime change," "Nuremberg trials," *etc.*, with swipes at Franco-European cowardice. In fact, to read those columns now is to return to the enchanted land of early Limbaugh. A book I don't expect to read soon is *The Confessions of George Will.*

Conservatism? Again, it depends on how you define it. The English philosopher Michael Oakeshott, whose name Will used to drop when he was showing the rubes how tony true conservatism could be, warned against using government as "a vast reservoir of power" in pursuit of "favorite projects." Such talk now sounds archaic. But so, already, do David Brooks' "national-greatness conservatism" and Fred Barnes' eulogies of Bush's "big-government conservatism," to say nothing of Barnes' judgment that the Iraq invasion was "the greatest act of benevolence one nation has ever performed for another" and Richard Lowry's 2005 effusion on the cover of *National Review*: "We Are Winning!" No wonder conservatives aren't quoting themselves much these days. Only the neocons, or at least the few who still admit they are neocons, still insist that the war was a splendid idea until Bush & Co. made a hash of it.

How did it come to this? *National Review* has had to repudiate its own founder, the aging, ailing Bill Buckley, who has written that he would have opposed the war had he known in 2003 what he knows now. Will has taken a wiser approach: Get lost in the crowd, act as if it had all been someone else's blunder, and pray that nobody digs up your old columns.

And if you write about someone who was right all along, such as Ron Paul, just sneer at him.

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Property Rights and the Founding

The Classical Liberal Reading

by Marco Bassani

Americans entertain the peculiar idea that history—or, at least, "our history"—is the reign of continuity. In spite of all the talk about revolution, there appears to be a remarkable degree of stability in every substantial political rupture. The American Revolution was, in fact (we are told by historians), a "conservative one," restoring the political order the British had wrecked. The not-so-civil "Civil War" was a much-needed Second American Revolution that finally rendered everyone a citizen, making the promises of the first "conservative revolution" available to human beings of all races and, eventually, to every nation on earth. The Progressive Era, New Deal, and Great Society actually reshaped the role of the federal government in the era of mass politics. However, this was invariably presented as a natural expansion and development of the original American experiment in self-government and framed in the half-clever motto: "Hamiltonian means to achieve Jeffersonian ends."

History, in this country, is seen as a narrative without the solution of continuity. In Montgomery, one can find the George Wallace Museum and the Rosa Parks Memorial within a few yards. While the Confederate flag has recently been the object of much controversy, the men who fought under it are celebrated alongside those who destroyed the Old South. With the possible exception of the faceless Klan of the 1950's, American history lacks villains. From Aaron Burr and George A. Custer up to Richard Nixon, revisionist historians are ever at work rendering the label of scoundrel always provisional for notable characters. While this general outlook may have some merits—after all, this is a free country; politicians are criticized when they are alive and cherished when they are dead—it also engenders some peculiar delusions.

The notion of living in a republic that is pretty much the same as the one envisioned by the Founding Fathers is indeed an enduring figment of the American imagination. In the field of politics, this, in turn, could be seen as the hallucination that this country's moral philosophy is not so distant after all from that of the Founding Fathers. Washington, Adams, and Jefferson are considered permanent contemporaries, as their voices have been sought by politicians and historians alike to tell us something about the perennial "heart and soul" of America.

Nowhere is the separation of the America of 2007 and that of the founding era more patent than in the field of property rights. The way the Founding Fathers thought about property (and, thus, about the legitimate scope and role of political institutions) is utterly at odds with any notion of rights that has been circulating in America in the past century.

The Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States is still respected, but mainly as the "birth certificate of the nation." The fact that it is probably the document most closely related to the natural-rights doctrine ever written in the history of mankind is certainly less than cherished. The Declaration contains a sweeping array of notions about power, individuals, their rights, the legitimate ends of government; in brief, about the substance of a just political order. Thomas Jefferson was only the best representative of a revolutionary generation that grew up in a natural-rights mind-set, as political arguments based on natural rights permeate the thinking of the Founding Fathers, as well as the debates of the early republic. The Preamble to the Declaration declares all rights, starting from the colonies' right to independence, unmistakably prescribed by the "Laws of Nature and Nature's God."

Although Jefferson did not mention the right to own property, the finest scholars have always argued that the "pursuit of happiness" was so broad as to incorporate property rights into the system. Ronald Hamowy explained several years ago the true significance of the "pursuit of happiness" very nicely and persuasively: Human beings "may act as they choose in their search for ease, comfort, felicity, and grace, either by owning property or not, by accumulating wealth or distributing it, by opting for material success or asceticism, in a word, by determining the path to their own earthly and heavenly salvation as they alone see fit." In other words, the true meaning of the "pursuit of happiness" in Jeffersonian doctrine is the right to have a government that does not infringe on one's own natural rights—on property rights, in particular.

This "classical liberalism" that was prominent at the founding, embodied in a radicalization of Lockean political thought, guarantees first and foremost full moral and political legitimacy to the pursuit of purely private interests. Such a general vision implies that the individual is portrayed in a different set of relations, with other men in the free market, and with agents acting on behalf of the government. The free-market consensual relations regulate the legitimate order of dealings with other individuals, and the natural-rights doctrine (the idea that there are certain inalienable rights that cannot be encroached upon by government) limits justifiable state actions. The boundaries of the political sphere are watertight, at least in principle: Government is there just to provide a safe environment for the individual's enjoyment of his natural rights.

Influenced by John Locke's political doctrine, or at least a popular version of it (as contained in *Cato's Letters*, the collection of political essays written by English pamphleteers John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon in the 1720's, or in William Blackstone's *Commentaries*), the revolutionary generation thought that the rights to life, liberty, and property were absolute. The noted historian Forrest McDonald wrote that, "almost to a man, Patriots were agreed that the proper ends of government were to protect people in their lives, liberty, and property."

Marco Bassani is a professor of the history of political thought at University of Milan, Italy.

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However, these simple truths seemed a bit farfetched to the sophisticated scholars of later generations. The "progressive school" of history, which gained prominence in America about a century ago, forever changed our understanding of the Founding Fathers' view of rights. The historians of the past century framed a theoretical opposition between property rights and human rights that is very important in order to grasp the world we live in today, but quite misleading when projected into the founders' political universe.

Vernon Parrington, one of the most influential "progressive historians," was convinced that the Declaration and the Constitution were contradictory documents, which gave shape to a "conflict between the man and the dollar" that has characterized American history ever since its origins. Influenced by the works of J. Allen Smith, Frederick Jackson Turner, and the leading figure of the progressive school, Charles Beard, Parrington popularized a fantastic clash between the rights of property and the rights of man. An unceasing struggle between persons and property, between democracy and aristocracy, was seen as the constant feature of America since her beginning. It has thus been the permanent heritage of the "progressive school" to cast the conflicting element of American history in terms of "rights of persons" *versus* "rights of property," incorporated, respectively, in the Declaration and the Constitution. The current idea that property rights are an impediment to democracy (it is quite the reverse—democracy is used all over the world to hamper and curtail property rights) is the direct heir of the "progressive school" dichotomy between rights of persons and rights of property.

Such an opposition, however, is both logically unfounded and historically unacceptable. None of those who took part in the Revolution believed that the defense of the person and his rights entailed a denial of the rights of property. Although there was fervent debate over questions of legitimately or illicitly acquired property, no one sought to utilize democracy, the extension of suffrage, and political assemblies for the purpose of expropriating legitimately held properties.

The idea that property was endowed with a characteristic that approached sacrality was closely connected with love of freedom. As Edmund Morgan put it many years ago, "For Eighteenth-century Americans, property and liberty were one and inseparable, because property was the only foundation yet conceived for security of life and liberty: without security for his property, it was thought, no man could live or be free except at the mercy of another." In short, property rights were both natural and inalienable, according to the Founding Fathers. But the meaning of all these qualifiers connected to rights has been lost in our world. When a building technique declines, its secrets are lost: What appeared simple to the architects of Gothic cathedrals remains a mystery for posterity. Likewise, current debates on rights, even when conducted in an attempt to reconstruct a lost world, lead to a complicated rendering of what used to be simple and clear in the 18th century.

The idea, expressed in clear terms in the Declaration itself, is that the only legitimate end of government is that of upholding rights whose origin precedes any law written down by man. Men are already endowed with all their rights before entering into "political society." In this framework, which dominated the Founding Fathers' view of a just political order, there is only one "civil right." It arises with the very genesis of political society, and it is the individual right to be protected in the enjoyment of one's natural rights. Individuals who have entered into political society have a "global" civil right *vis-à-vis* the government: the right to enjoy protection not of artificial rights—which are the fruits of changing circumstances and of the preferences of lawmakers—but of their natural rights. They are always endowed with a further natural right that, by its very nature, cannot be the object of a contract: the right to revolution, their right to protection not *by* the government but *against* the government.

The whole political history of the United States could be written with the crystal-clear doctrine of natural rights espoused in the Declaration as its point of departure, followed by the slow but constant progress of the Jacobin idea that only the law makes you free and, eventually, an owner.

Thomas Jefferson stated this view very eloquently in a letter to F.W. Gilmer, dated June 27, 1816:

> Our legislators are not sufficiently apprized of the rightful limits of their power; that their true office is to declare and enforce only our natural rights . . . and to take none of them from us. No man has a natural right to commit aggression on the equal rights of another; and this is all from which the laws ought to restrain him . . . and the idea is quite unfounded, that on entering into society we give up any natural right.

For the revolutionary generation, property rights were inalienable as well as natural. As even some fine contemporary scholars are still puzzled by this, it might be appropriate to explain exactly what they meant.

The right to property entails the power to alienate the goods that form the object of this right. An individual could never exchange a single good during the entire course of his life and still fully enjoy the inalienable and natural right of property on a par with the greatest investor or real-estate owner in the world. This is so because the right to property in no way derives from market transactions. An exchange transfers rights over things, but it does not create the right. Rather, property rights derive from the very nature of human beings, first and foremost from their full ownership of themselves.

The real foundation of the natural right to property is not rights over things, but self-ownership. So the real meaning of inalienability is that one cannot deprive oneself of self-ownership, while, on the other hand, rights over tangible things are

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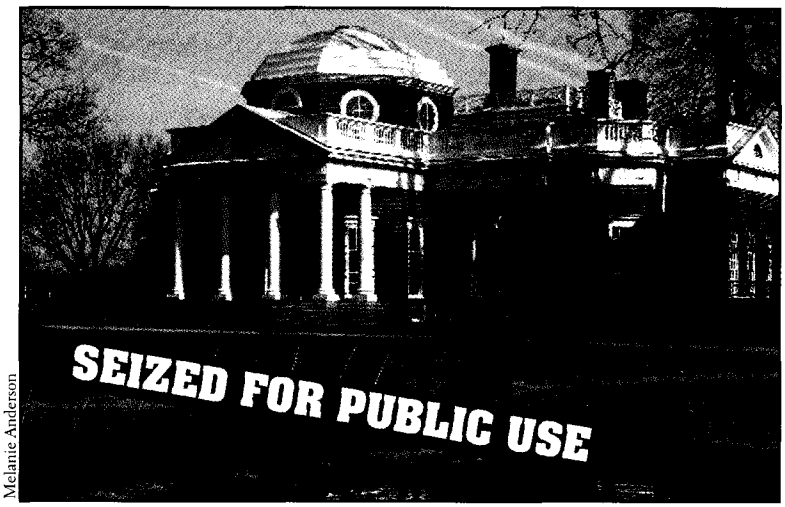
perfectly alienable. Since man cannot abjure himself and his own nature, all rights that constitute the essence of a human being are inalienable: They cannot form the object of a transaction, whether voluntary or involuntary.



Melanie Anderson

The paradox of inalienable rights—all of which are, of course, natural rights—lies precisely in the fact that no one can legitimately deprive himself of them. It is now easy to comprehend why property rights took on such immeasurable importance for 18th-century thinkers, and for Americans, in particular. A property right is the right to dispose fully and freely of one's own body, of one's own faculties, of the fruits of one's labors, and of all that is acquired without violating the legitimate rights of others. These rights are "inalienable," as they cannot be estranged from the subject, either by the holder of these rights or by anyone else. These rights cannot be disposed of by the government, despite the fact that, in the Founding Fathers' understanding, government was the most typical violator of such rights. In the 18th century, the adjectives *natural*, *inalienable*, *inherent*, and *essential* always appear as synonyms. The various usages of the terms appear to us less than rigorous because, to them, the doctrine to which these terms refer was clear and familiar. *Inalienable* simply means that no one can deprive himself (or his descendants) of these rights, not even voluntarily. But inalienability bears the imprint of nature. Nature makes certain rights inalienable by branding them with her own imprint. By creating man, "nature's God" has also endowed man with natural and inalienable rights. These two characteristics of the rights imprinted by nature are inseparable.

Another thing that is not usually entirely appreciated today is that the classical-liberal doctrine of rights is not "conservative" at all, but revolutionary. A natural view of rights commands not only a sacred respect for property, but an indictment of unjust acquisitions. The Founding Fathers were under the influence of a moral doctrine that did not consider legitimate any kind of property. In their view, the "feudal" overlords had built up their wealth thanks to the favors granted by political power and by a system that could not be reconciled with the natural order. These favors had been paid, in turn, by those who had far less access to political power and, thus, to the iniquitous means of acquiring property. Though seldom brought into political practice, there is, at the core of the founding, a genuinely revolutionary program designed to distinguish between just and unjust property.

The Founding Fathers' political world was very different from ours in another respect. They not only considered property a sacred, natural, and inviolable right but thought that the community was no more than the sum of the individuals composing it. Differing very sharply from the teachings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the prophet of the French Revolution, they believed that there was no interest in society transcending the individual. That is, the Founding Fathers lacked the collectivist view that is conducive to the acceptance of a redistributive approach. In a very famous letter of 1789 on the theme of generational sovereignty, Thomas Jefferson wrote to James Madison that "What is true of every member of the society individually, is true of them all collectively, since the rights of the whole can be no more than the sum of the rights of individuals."

In 1793, during a debate on the proposed Jacobin constitution in France, Robespierre advanced the notion that property is purely conventional and offered the most synthetic definition of such an idea: "Property is the right that each citizen has to enjoy and to dispose of the portion of goods that is guaranteed to him by the law." Although, for many decades, America would still consider such a view utterly foreign to her political heritage, it was this conception that gained prominence here as well as all over the world.

The whole political history of the United States could be written with the crystal-clear doctrine of natural rights espoused in the Declaration as its point of departure, followed by the slow but constant progress of the Jacobin idea that only the law makes you free and, eventually, an owner.

The way a community looks at property rights, as the history of Marxism shows conclusively, is the most important single factor for the organization of a political order. The decline of the *Novus Ordo* envisioned by Jefferson and his generation followed the decline of their ideas on property rights. It could not survive the more sophisticated ideas on property that became fashionable many years later. The Founding Fathers were too naive to believe it possible that a right to a certain quality of life could be put forward, or a right over another person's goods, or the right to have a minimum income guaranteed through taxation.

After the refined analyses of Bentham and Marx, to name just two, it is claimed we cannot any longer believe that it is nature that prescribes man's rights. However, the lawgivers are no more than two. It is either "Nature and Nature's God" or the Prince (*viz.*, in the American political jargon, Congress). We stand today in the wake of a protracted spell of juridical absolutism: The ancient notion "*Quod principi placuit legis habet vigorem*" ("What pleases the Prince is law") has been enormously refined but not posited on different grounds. It is up to the volition of several assemblies of persons—at times, to nine judges—to decide whether your share of wealth is consistent with the welfare of the community and what portion of your goods is properly yours.

American conservatives (who have done as much to undermine the simple natural-rights doctrine of the origins as their liberal counterparts) must now face the fact that the republic of today is based much more on Robespierre's ideas than on those of Jefferson. Whatever freedoms, rights, or properties one can enjoy are the gracious gift of legislators and courts. And this is the most obvious proof that any link to the political world of the Founding Fathers has been severed.

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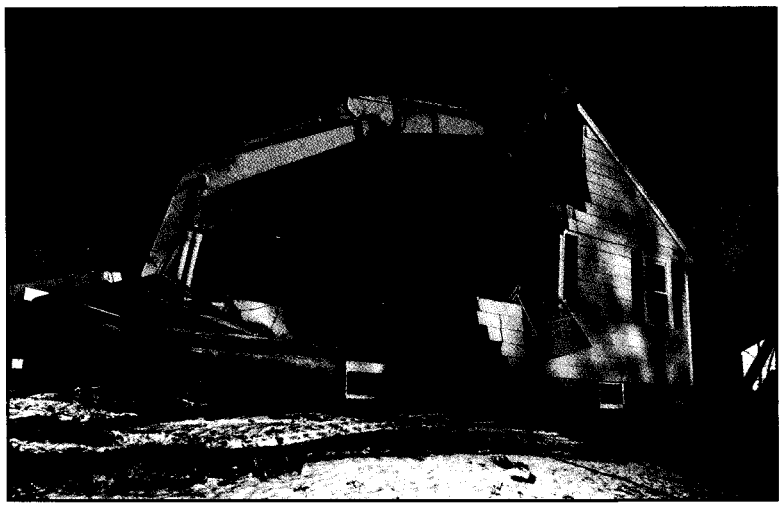
The War on Blight

You May Be Next

by Steve Berg



Melanie Anderson

If you live in an older section of town, this may already have happened to you. You wake up in a cold sweat. For the past 15 years, you and your husband have lovingly restored an old Victorian house. It was pretty decrepit when you started; now, it is an object of pride and beauty. You replaced all of the windows with custom-made units that replicated the original styles. The classic wood floors, with a different type of wood on each level, have all been carefully refinished and add a warm glow. All the plumbing is new—PVC and copper tubing—and all of the wiring has been changed from knob-and-tube to the latest and safest breaker boxes. Your house looks so nice that several of your neighbors from the Elm Street Neighborhood Association have started fixing theirs up, too.

Unfortunately, there is that place down at the corner, the one that houses at least 40 undocumented workers and their families. The gutters are falling to the ground; it has not had a coat of paint in at least the time you have lived in the neighborhood; and there are more families living in camper trucks and trailers parked in the yard. Goats and chickens have reduced the lawn to dirt.

That house is much better than the one next door, which was broken up into small apartments many years ago. It, too, has not seen any maintenance in years. There are broken beer and whiskey bottles strewn about the seldom-mowed lawn. Cars and motorcycles are coming and going at all hours of the day and night, and you are sure that drugs are being sold and used in copious quantities inside. Last year, there was a fatal stabbing in front of it, and a friend on the police force told you that he thought the incident was drug related.

To top it off, there are the people directly behind you. You had long dreamed of gazing out of your dining-room window across the formal garden in your back yard. Now you could, thanks to all of your hard work, but you choose to keep the drapes closed. Right over the property line, beyond your carefully trimmed hedges, are four smashed-up stock cars. Tonight, and every night, a neon Budweiser sign flashes over the back door, reflecting on the glass of your bedroom windows. As you watch it flicker, you shudder and wish the city would do something about all of this blight before the entire neighborhood tanks.

You roll over and go back to sleep, but your nightmare may only be starting. The city may do something about all of that blight, but it probably will not be what you have in mind.

The next morning, at city hall, the planning department is meeting to discuss a redevelopment effort in the Elm Street Neighborhood. The city planner, Rex Holmes, is talking with Nancy Reid, his administrative intern. Rex tells her that the Elm Street Neighborhood meets all the criteria for blight and dilapidation in the state Tax Increment Finance District statute and is ripe for an urban-renewal project that would get rid of all those crummy slums and replace them with buildings in the New Urbanism style, with retail on the ground floor and offices and high-end condos above.

"But," Nancy protests, "the Fentons' house is in that area. I've been in it many times, and it is beautiful! And a number of their neighbors are fixing up their old Victorians, too."

"That may be true," Rex replies, "but the vast majority of them are hovels. None of them meet the codes, and it would be prohibitively expensive to renovate them. Besides, their owners are not going to rehab them, and even if they did, the tax base there would be far less than what we would have with a new development. The city desperately needs to increase its tax revenue, and commercial and high-end residential is the way to do it."

"But what about industrial development?" asks Nancy.

Steve Berg, a former city administrator, teaches public administration at Northern Illinois University.

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"Why tear down some nice houses to put in commercial and high-end residential buildings when we have the abandoned Acme Industries site to rehab? Think of all the jobs that would create."

"Manufacturing is dead," laments Rex, somewhat disingenuously. "It's all going to China. Besides, that place was in use for more than a hundred years. I hate to think of what has been dumped in the ground. Take it from me, you don't even want to scratch the dirt with a shovel in that place if there's anyone from the state EPA around. Cleaning up a brownfield site like that could cost millions, and we would never get that money back. No, we need to put together an agreement with NuTown Development Corporation, so we can start the condemnation proceedings on those Elm Street houses. Thanks to the Supreme Court, all we have to do is show that taking those properties will result in a public benefit, and there's nothing the Fentons or anyone else can do to stop us." Rex smiles, thinking of how good the Elm Street project will look on his résumé. It might even get him noticed at the next state city-planning meeting and open up the possibility of a better job in a bigger city.

The U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Kelo* v. *City of New London* (2005), in which a municipality was allowed to take private property held by individuals and give it to developers, has stirred up considerable citizen outrage, causing homeowners to pressure state legislatures and spawning ballot initiatives in many states. *Kelo*'s slight change in the understanding of the restrictions on eminent-domain takings has huge ramifications. Acting in its modern legislative role, the Court effectively changed the reading of the Fifth Amendment's Takings Clause from "nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation" to "nor shall private property be taken for public *benefit*, without just compensation." This seemingly minor alteration has created a flood of eminent-domain abuses by local and state governments, who hide behind the veil of economic development and fighting blight.

At the root of this crisis is globalism. Sending manufacturing and other skilled jobs to those foreign locales where wages are the lowest has become the norm. While this has improved the fortunes of major finance capitalists and multinational corporations, it has proved catastrophic for local governments. *Chronicles* has been one of the few voices discussing this process in depth—appropriately, since its hometown of Rockford, Illinois, has been particularly hard hit by it. Municipalities that once could depend on property-tax monies from industrial concerns now host acres of empty factories and boarded-up downtown businesses. Nonetheless, in these places, the demand for municipal services has not diminished and, in fact, has often increased as the equalized assessed valuation of properties within their borders has dropped. These local governments are desperate for revenue, making them easy prey for rent-seeking developers and their allied consulting firms. Nearly any project that promises jobs and increased tax revenues will be approved and promoted by revenue-starved municipalities, whether or not it is truly viable or even good for either the neighborhood it directly affects or the city as a whole. In this environment, private property is increasingly at risk.

The mechanism normally utilized to advance these rent-seeking developments is the fight against blight. However, blight is not easily defined. The great satirist Tom Leher once sang that, "When correctly viewed, everything is lewd!" Like obscenity, blight is largely subjective, in the eye of the beholder. And sadly, as viewed by many municipal officials and their developer friends, your home, your small business, and even your church may be blight. So, not surprisingly, property owners have started to fight back.

Some people are property-rights fundamentalists. (*Nobody can tell me what to do with my property!*) Many of them take their cues from libertarians who never read far enough in Locke's *Second Treatise of Civil Government* to get out of the state of nature and into civil society. Outside of the state of nature, many municipalities do suffer from problems with blight. Frequently, property owners either cannot afford or have no incentive to exercise proper stewardship over their holdings. The property degrades and is often abandoned; then, the municipality has to condemn and demolish it under unsafe-building statutes. This places a heavy burden on already financially challenged local governments and their taxpayers.

Because state and local governments have legitimate interests in public safety and public health, not all takings that invoke eminent domain for economic-development purposes are illegitimate. However, since much of their ethos comes out of the Progressive Movement, many city managers firmly believe that Progress inevitably trumps even reasonable property rights. Consequently, groups such as the Illinois Municipal League and the Illinois City/County Management Association have worked together to try to stymie eminent-domain reform. For them, fighting blight means increasing the local tax base, getting rid of less-desirable residents, and promoting an upscale image. The problem is that perfectly adequate older homes and businesses are branded as blighted because of their small size, lack of multiple bathrooms, or age. Your lovingly restored Victorian house may be their next target. Your home or business may already be in the crosshairs of your local community development or planning department. My friend's car-repair shop has been kept up well since it was built in the 1940's; it is now slated for "redevelopment" into retail shops and condos—all in the name of fighting blight.

According to the Institute for Justice, 17 states have acted to try to prevent at least some of these exercises of eminent domain, in which property is taken from one private owner and given to another. One method is to reform overly loose definitions of blight. Another 17 states have increased protection against eminent-domain abuse. Three states had no legislative sessions in 2006. Thirteen states have failed to pass any eminent-domain reform legislation. The states of Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Michigan, New Hampshire, and South Carolina approved constitutional amendments reforming eminent domain. Some of these also added statutes that further protect private property from *Kelo*-style assaults. Michigan adopted Proposal 06-4, a constitutional amendment that prohibits government from taking private property for transfer to another private individual or business if the purposes are for economic development and increasing tax revenue. If an individual's principal residence is taken by government for public use, he must be paid at least 125 percent of the property's fair-market value. The amendment also makes it more difficult for government to take a private property. If a municipality wishes to exercise eminent domain in order to eliminate blight, it must now meet a higher standard of proof that the taking is for a public use. The ballot proposal was passed in November 2006 with 80.1 percent of the vote.

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The Alaska legislature passed HB318, which was signed by the governor. This law prohibits the transfer of private property from one individual to another for economic development unless the taking is authorized by the state legislature. In Arizona, a strong eminent-domain reform bill was passed by the legislature but vetoed by the governor. It was then presented as a ballot referendum and passed with 64.8 percent of the vote. This proposal greatly tightened the definition of blight and prohibited the use of eminent domain for economic development. Despite much sound and fury, California's Proposition 90 was defeated in the last election, garnering only 47.6 percent of the vote. California's legal definition of blight is very loose, and the proposed measure did not sufficiently tighten the public-use loophole, leaving the door wide open to government takings for economic development. While Colorado has improved its private-property protections, the state still allows the courts to determine what constitutes public use. At least it now prohibits takings for economic development and increased tax revenues. Connecticut, the home of the *Kelo* case, failed to do anything to restrict the abuse of eminent domain.

Illinois passed SB3086, which was signed by the governor. The law essentially uses the standard of blight defined in the Illinois Tax Increment Finance District statutes as the overall criterion for determining blighted property. Proving that a property is blighted now falls on the governmental entity seeking to condemn it. The new law allows for the use of eminent domain for economic development if the action is secondary to a project of urban renewal; property can only be taken from one party and handed over to another if it is in a blighted area and the project conforms to a regional plan adopted within the past five years. The law upholds the right of the state and its subsidiary governments to use their police powers to attack slums and other properties that pose a threat to public health and safety. Agricultural land is protected from seizure for economic development.

Interestingly, Florida—a state that has been in the forefront of intensive development for many years—has done more than most other states to address this problem. Florida's House Bill 1567, which has been passed and signed by the governor, should serve as a model for other states. Under the new law, property condemned and seized must not be transferred to another owner for ten years. This removes the threat of *Kelo*. Sensibly, local governments are required to address issues of genuine blight by using their police powers. The law still allows eminent domain for traditional public uses—roads and government buildings. In addition to this statutory approach, the Florida legislature also put a referendum on the November 2006 ballot that would require a three-fifths vote by both houses of the state legislature to allow any exceptions to the prohibitions on using eminent domain to transfer private property from one owner to a developer. This bill passed with 69 percent of the vote.

Florida shows that the rights of property owners can be protected against rent-seeking developers and their allies in local governments without removing the tools necessary to protect public health and safety. Blighted and unsafe properties are a major headache to most city managers and administrators. If used properly, eminent domain can help to remedy that problem; if no restrictions are placed on its use, it can create more headaches. Ultimately, the best way to fight blight is to see that it never gets a chance to gain a toehold in the first place. c

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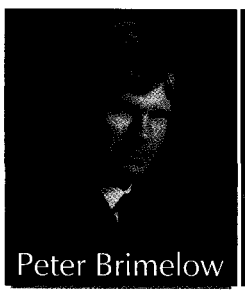
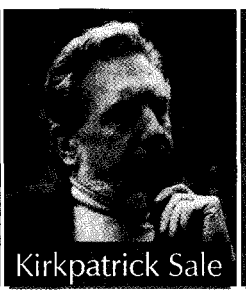

Peter Brimelow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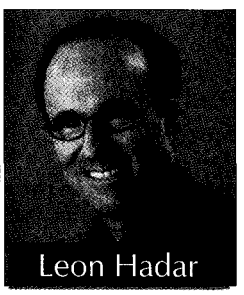
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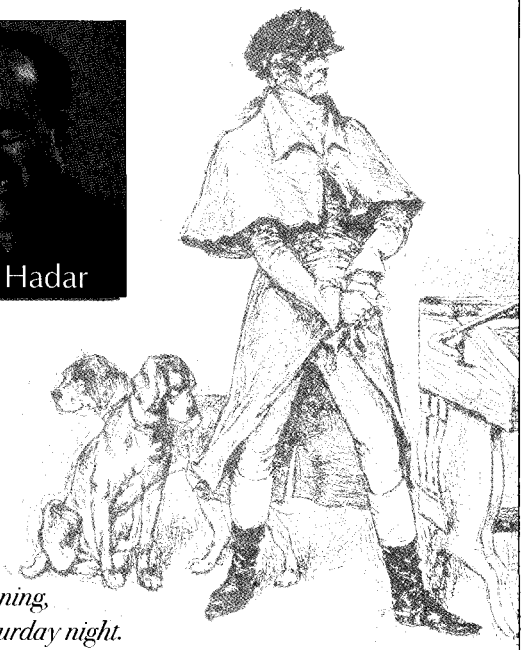

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Where Did Our Property Rights Go?

Not In My Back Yard

by Steven Greenhut

William Pitt the Elder, in his Speech on the Excise Bill delivered before the House of Commons, encapsulated our Founding Fathers' view of property rights when he said, "The poorest man may in his cottage bid defiance to all the force of the Crown. It may be frail; its roof may shake; the wind may blow through it; the storms may enter, the rain may enter—but the King of England cannot enter; all his forces dare not cross the threshold of the ruined tenement."

Today, most Americans consider themselves residents of the freest country that has ever graced the earth, yet they are about as committed to property rights as they are to limited government, states' rights, avoiding empire, and many other principles for which the Founding Fathers stood. I have been to city-council and planning-commission meetings. I have seen the way officials behave when a citizen asks for approval to remodel his home, build a new house, or start a new business. I have watched average Americans act like savages when their neighbors ask for a variance.

At a recent commission meeting, a developer proposed building 16 houses on roughly 30 acres of land that surround my dead-end street. Admittedly, I am not thrilled by the idea, since I enjoy the empty land adjacent to my home. I understand, however, that the land belongs to someone else, and that his proposed project is in keeping with my street's original zoning. I attended the meeting, asked a few legitimate questions regarding the project's tangible effects on my home (drainage, traffic, *etc.*), then spoke out in favor of the project. As I said at the meeting, before I bought my house, I went down to city hall, looked at tract maps, and inquired about the ownership of the land next to my house and about its zoning. I was told it was zoned for up to three houses per acre. I remember asking my wife, "Can you live with a few houses behind us? Eventually, someone will build there." She said, "No problem." That struck me as a reasonable way to do things.

My neighbors were not so reasonable, yelling and screaming and pounding their fists in the air. After all, they like looking at the land. One lady talked about how her kids like to play on it. And everyone agreed that, in this urban area, we need more open space for kids. I quietly mentioned that we should not be encouraging trespassing, but this did not resonate with my neighbors. (I am fairly certain that the same woman would not be thrilled if I showed up uninvited with some of my friends and threw a kegger by her backyard swimming pool.) I know most of my neighbors. They are polite and mostly conservative. Yet they behaved like a mob at the meeting. They are "stakeholders" who have a "right" to the current pastoral view. They believe the land should serve as a *de facto* park, and they would have been glad had the government simply banned any development on it without paying compensation.

At another meeting of the same planning commission, I listened as commissioners debated the appropriate hours in which a new business ought to operate. The commissioners had their own ideas about hours, signage, exterior look, interior design. The poor guy who stood before the council seemed amazed. To him, the whole affair seemed ridiculous: The commissioners spent about five minutes mulling over a situation in which he was risking a substantial amount of his own money. Yet, to obtain the necessary conditional-use permit, he had no choice but to agree to their conditions.

When I voice my objections to government-by-whim and to the obliteration of property rights, I routinely hear this reply: "Surely, you agree that government needs to set some standards on property use, zoning and otherwise. So, if you agree with some restrictions, then you shouldn't complain about commissioners doing their job. You wouldn't want a slaughterhouse next to your home, would you?" (Actually, a world without zoning restrictions would not necessarily mean slaughterhouses in the middle of subdivisions. Nuisance laws, protective covenants, and private-property associations could handle these matters quite nicely.)

Under our current zoning system, every property comes with a bundle of rights. When I bought my single-family home, I paid not just for the house itself and its postage-stamp lot, but for the entitlements that came with it. I have no right to demand that my property be rezoned to allow for the construction of multifamily condominiums. Likewise, the aforementioned developer bought the land adjacent to me at a price determined largely by the rules that govern that land—*e.g.*, 3 homes per acre, not 4, 5, or 50. However, if the local government refuses to allow him to build any homes on his site, it has effectively stolen his land.

In other words, in a relatively free society, people have the right to do with their land what they choose, so long as they conform to some clearly defined standards that came with the property. As long as the developer plays by the rules, being careful to build according to existing zoning, the city should have little else to do but to inspect his plans and confirm that he has a construction bond. And, in a free society, there are relatively few rules to worry about, anyway.

These days, though, there are lots of rules; yet, paradoxically, many local governments seem unbound by them. Review boards and commissions often give officials *carte blanche* to meddle in just about every property decision. Local governments insist that builders adopt certain designs and certain lot sizes. For a time, city officials demanded that most new

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Steven Greenhut is senior editorial writer and columnist for the Orange County Register *in Santa Ana, California, and the author of* Abuse of Power: How the Government Misuses Eminent Domain *(2004).*

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homes be on larger lots, because they were committed to the creation of suburbia. Now, New Urbanism and Smart Growth are popular, so officials mandate high-density developments on tiny lots with most of the land set aside for open space.

Our city officials today are more like Soviet planners. Recently, the city of Brea, California, convinced a judge to deny the Walgreens drugstore chain permission to locate one of its stores in the downtown simply because officials preferred entertainment venues in that area. In the late 1990's, the city had razed 50 acres of its old downtown and doled out $50 million in taxpayer subsidies to replace it with a gaudy new one that is more of an outdoor shopping mall than a real downtown. (It now boasts that the redeveloped "Birch Street" is a "village-style pedestrian-oriented promenade.") Brea is also subsidizing hand-picked developers to build high-density housing in the area and using downzoning to deprive current owners of hillside land from building any houses on their property. Officials are careful to allow the current owners to build a handful of houses (as opposed to the thousand-plus they are legally entitled to build under current zoning) to keep the city from having to compensate them for the takings.

This sort of behavior leaves little room for enterprise or freedom. Property investments are uncertain: You never know whether officials will decide to reduce your land's value with the stroke of a pen.

In my book *Abuse of Power: How the Government Misuses Eminent Domain*, I gave numerous examples of the increasingly common practice of cities driving homeowners and small-business owners off of their own land so that it can be transferred for pennies on the dollar to big national chain stores, who promise lucrative sales-tax revenues in return. This happens in almost every state. Often, the mere threat of eminent domain is enough to force people off their land. Cities claim that they need this power in order to get rid of crack houses and other genuine blight, but they have plenty of police powers at their disposal to deal with such issues. Instead, they use eminent domain mostly to assemble large parcels on behalf of wealthy developers. The stated goal is maximizing tax revenue, but the net result is that cities are deciding which neighborhoods get bulldozed and which companies benefit. It is no surprise that politically well-connected developers thrive and upstarts suffer.

Urban writer Jane Jacobs memorably said that "New ideas need old buildings." Yet people with new ideas do not have a chance in the current environment. Cities have their general plans; their specific plans; their zoning, conditional-use permits, architectural standards, color palettes, historic-district designations, redevelopment areas, and layer upon layer of additional rules and commissions that must approve virtually anything that anyone proposes to build or do. All these rules rig the game in favor of those who are already wealthy, as they are typically the ones with the financial means, lawyers, entitlement consultants, and lobbyists who can gain all the needed approvals. Main Street businesses, small ethnic stores, longtime homeowners who just want to be left alone—they must give up their dreams for the greater good. Call this what you wish, but don't call it a free society.

As with so many government-driven processes, the end result is often the opposite of what was intended. Cities impose so many rules and make it so difficult to build new houses that they drive up the cost of the limited supply and force people seeking affordable housing out into the hinterlands, where they are saddled with long commutes. The same officials who create these rules will turn around and lament the lack of affordable housing or the increase in congestion and sprawl. They then propose their government-funded solutions to these problems—inclusionary zoning, light-rail service. Previously, planners made it impossible for developers to build traditional towns and cities through their parking requirements and suburban-lot-size requirements. Now, those same planners are trying to impose a new set of rules to encourage urban living.

Melanie Anderson

In her dissent to the U.S. Supreme Court's June 2005 decision *Kelo* v. *New London*, which allowed the city of New London, Connecticut, to use eminent domain against owners of historic homes in the city's waterfront area, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor observed that

> Any property may now be taken for the benefit of another private party, but the fallout from this decision will not be random. The beneficiaries are likely to be those citizens with disproportionate influence and power in the political process, including large corporations and development firms. As for the victims, the government now has license to transfer property from those with fewer resources to those with more.

That is an apt description of property rights in America today.

Big business rarely favors property rights. In California, when Proposition 90—which would have banned eminent-domain abuse and forced cities to pay for regulatory takings—was on the November 2006 ballot, the state's business community did not sit idly by. They actively opposed it and joined forces with the California Redevelopment Association and other takings-happy government advocates. Yet these same business groups expect an editorial from me defending *their* property rights whenever the environmentalists or some other group seeks to limit the use of their land. I have a standard answer for them, but it is not fit to print in a family magazine.

Until more Americans are willing to stand up for the other guy's rights, and not just for their own preferences, property rights will continue to fade away under a steady stream of rules, regulations, and government whims.

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Of Landlords, Leases, and Calico Indians

Fenimore Cooper and Private Property

by Jack Trotter

In 1845, James Fenimore Cooper wrote *Satanstoe*, the first novel of *The Littlepage Manuscripts*, a trilogy Cooper conceived as a fictional response to the New York "anti-rent" uprising that, since 1839, had pitted leasehold tenants against their patrician landlords. It was a struggle that, in Cooper's view, threatened the property rights enshrined in the Constitution. At the heart of the struggle was the claim by tenant farmers that their landlords were engaging in "feudal" practices incompatible with the egalitarian aims of the American Revolution. Inspired, in part, by Free Soil ideology, anti-renters were aggrieved by a system of leases that granted them long-term tenancy and rights of sale, while denying them the status of freeholders. While the landlords took their stand on the rights granted them by their legal titles, anti-renters claimed that true ownership of the land was vested in the man who had improved it with his labor. More radically, some groups such as the National Reformers sought to use the power of the state to confiscate landlords' estates and to redistribute the land according to various utopian schemes of universal ownership. In Cooper's view, such notions were an outright invitation to theft and an instance of "popular misrule" threatening to become tyranny.

The leasehold system opposed by the anti-rent movement was, by the late 1830's, over 200 years old. First established by the Dutch in the 1630's, it was replicated by British authorities in 1664. Although before the Revolution landlords did possess extensive powers, reforms after 1776 abolished feudal tenure in New York, along with primogeniture. Thus, the anti-renters' frequent claims that the leasehold system was a feudal relic were not substantial. On the other hand, it is true that landlords expected from their tenants an Old World deference that, at times, fueled the class envy that erupted so violently after 1839. If the landlords expected deference, however, they were also aware of their obligations and acted, for the most part, benevolently toward their sometimes hard-pressed tenants. Ironically, it may have been this very benevolence that served as a catalyst for revolt. Both before and after the Revolution, landlords did not always consistently enforce payment of rents (whether in cash or in kind). By the 1830's, the number of tenants seriously in arrears rose alarmingly, as did landlord indebtedness. When Stephen Van Rensselaer III died in 1839, he was over $400,000 in debt. When his eldest son, Stephen IV, assumed control of half of the divided estate, he began aggressively to enforce collection of back rents, a move that provoked immediate resistance.

In fairness, it should be noted that the terms of the leases in question, although legal, were sometimes onerous. While some were "perpetual" and some were granted in "lives" or for shorter terms, in virtually every case, the landlords retained rights over "improvements" made on the properties. Most notorious were the "quarter-sale" provisions. Tenants who held leases in "lives," for example, were legally able to sell their leases for a profit, but those profits were reduced by a quarter (or even a third) in remittances to the landlord. In practice, this meant that tenants who hoped to reinvest their profits in a freehold were often unable to meet the market price. Thus, a laudable desire for landed independence was frustrated.

The anti-rent resistance first became an organized movement on the Rensselaer and Livingston estates, spreading outward from there as the movement began to find support, not only among tenants but among political activists in both the Whig and Democratic parties, who saw in the resistance a vehicle for opposing the political power of the patroons. Anti-renters formed voluntary associations, circulated pledges requiring signers to withhold rent from the landlords, and, when landlords sought to confiscate or evict, formed militant bands of "Indian" vigilantes disguised in calico gowns and pantaloons, grotesque horned masks, and strings of beads. By 1844, according to some accounts, as many as 10,000 such "braves" had organized into numerous tribes, each with its own rituals of initiation. Many of the anti-renters saw themselves as a revolutionary vanguard, destined to complete the business begun in 1776. To the landlords, the activities of the associations appeared to herald a second revolution, an all-leveling Chartist hydra that would replace the old federalism with what Cooper termed a "tyranny of numbers."

Cooper's rejoinder to this threat in *The Littlepage Manuscripts* was to trace the "decay of principle" that would eventually give rise to the anti-rent crisis. In *Satanstoe*, set two decades before the Revolution, Cornelius "Corny" Littlepage, the offspring of a family of minor New York gentry, is an idealized representation of the natural aristocrat for whom property is not simply another commodity but the guarantor of true independence and an instrument of social stability. An exemplar of the Christian gentleman, Corny is proud of his Old World heritage but prouder still of his native land. He is a thoroughly admirable character who, as he narrates his own story in a comically self-deprecating fashion, contrives to charm all but the most cynical of readers. One of Cooper's most attractive young heroes, Corny epitomizes the leisured and civilized manliness that, in Cooper's view, only a rural, landed elite could produce. By way of contrast, Cooper introduces Jason Newcome, a Connecticut Yankee schoolteacher whose only "virtue" is an innate, materialistic cunning. Unlike Corny (to whom he opportunistically attaches himself), Newcome recognizes no authority higher than himself. Manners, inherited custom, deference to one's social superiors—all of these are an affront to his radically Puritan individualism. This contrast between

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Jack Trotter writes from Charleston, South Carolina.

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Corny and Newcome is central to Cooper's purpose, for, as the decades encompassed by the trilogy unfold, the world of the Littlepages is increasingly inhabited by men of Newcome's ilk. At first an anomaly treated with amused forbearance, by sheer force of numbers and the spread of egalitarian envy, they become an ominous threat to the hierarchical social order that Cooper defends.

Satanstoe narrates Corny's journey north to the area around Albany to establish his family's claim to a substantial piece of property—40,000 acres purchased from the Indians—called Mooseridge. In Albany, he courts, and is eventually betrothed to, the delightful Anneke Mordaunt, daughter of Hermann Mordaunt, a gentleman of means who has also purchased a piece of property, called Ravensnest, in the same area. This private quest for land becomes entangled in the events of the French and Indian War when Corny and his entourage defend both the Littlepage and Mordaunt properties against the invading French and their Huron allies. In the end, with the union of Corny and Anneke, a new dynasty is established.

In the second novel, *The Chainbearer* (1845), Corny's son, Mordaunt Littlepage, becomes embroiled in a conflict with Aaron Thousandacres, a squatter on the Mooseridge property who has built a sawmill and enriched himself at the family's expense. The Revolution is recent history, and a new democratic spirit stirs. Thousandacres embodies this spirit in its most debased form. For him, property belongs to the man who is bold enough to declare his right to it, regardless of titles. His character is a more overtly anarchistic reprise of Jason Newcome's. Defending his right to the portion of the Littlepage property that he has occupied, he argues that "It is enough that a man wants the land, and he comes, or sends[,] to secure it. Possession is everything." Thousandacres' title to the land is the "best of titles, the Lord's title," for he fancies himself a lordly Adam with a "secret natural right" (as Mordaunt phrases it) to stake his claim wherever the spirit of possession, or want, moves him to do so.

Pondering Thousandacres' philosophy of "secret natural right," which anticipates the more radical of the anti-renter arguments, Mordaunt notes that, when such men "[reduce] their claim to this standard, they put it on a level with the rest of mankind." How are rival claims to the same property to be adjudicated? "Nature gives nothing exclusively to an individual, beyond his individuality. . . . [A]ll beyond that he is compelled to share, under the law of nature, with the rest of his race." Hence, a title based on "original possession" is no title at all, for, if all can claim it equally, then it will remain perpetually in dispute. Mordaunt admits, as Cooper does in *The American Democrat*, that it is "merely human convention that gives any title its force and authority"; yet, however artificial that may seem, without such convention, no title of any value, nor any lasting possession, would be possible.

In *The Redskins* (1846), 60 years have passed, and the tide of Jacksonian democracy has swept the country. *Equality* is the shibboleth on every tongue. Hugh Littlepage, grandson of Mordaunt, and his uncle, "Roo," return to New York after a sojourn abroad, having learned that the Mooseridge and Ravensnest properties are threatened by the anti-rent uprising and that some of the Littlepage tenants have taken up the cause. Intent on investigating the matter but fearing attack if they appear openly on the properties, Hugh and his uncle disguise themselves as, respectively, an itinerant German organ grinder and a seller of trinkets. This amusing device allows Cooper to place his protagonists in the midst of the fray with an excuse to mingle and converse with whomever they please. And converse they do. Well over half of this novel is given over to extended dialogue on the anti-rent controversy, leaving no stone unturned. Considered as a work of fiction, *The Redskins* is the weakest of the trilogy, possessing little in the way of plot or character development. Considered as an exercise in polemics, it is equally flawed, for, by making Hugh—himself a landlord—his narrator, Cooper's animus against the anti-renters is all too evident. Yet there are scenes in which this weakness is avoided, especially those where Cooper allows those tenants who have resisted the anti-rent hysteria to speak in their own voices.

One such scene occurs near the middle of the novel, when a large gathering of anti-renters has appropriated a village church on the Ravensnest estate to rally more tenants to the cause. The featured anti-rent "lecturer" argues for the abolition of the leasehold system, questioning the validity of the landlords' titles. Having been granted originally under the authority of the British crown, such titles can have no real claim on the "people." For "the people had conquered the country from that sovereign, and put themselves in his place. . . . The people had conquered the land, and . . . had a right to take the land." He admits that the "accursed" law, as it presently stands, grants possession to the landlords; but, in keeping with the labor theory of value propagated by the Free Soil Movement, he contends that "true possession" belongs to those who toil upon the land. The landlords' titles make of them a "privileged class [that] ought to be brought down to the level of gin'rel humanity." For one man is as good as another "in all things." The majority should exercise its "absolute sovereignty"; as for the minority, it is their "duty to submit." If the minority is unhappy with this state of affairs, then the solution is easy: "Any man can fall in with the majority, and sensible folks commonly do." Equality, he urges, has been misunderstood. "Substantial" equality is not the "pitiful equality before the law" that the landlords defend, but a real equality in which the land is divided equally.

Rising to refute what he considers to be patent nonsense, one Mr. Hall speaks eloquently in his homespun dialect against the notion that one man is as good as another. He concedes that "One man ought to have the same general rights as another . . . but if one man is as good as another, why do we have the trouble and cost of elections?" It would be less trouble if the people simply "drew lots, as we do for jurors." Nor is Hall a great admirer "of them that are always telling the people they're perfect." In an admirably concise dismissal of the people's absolute sovereignty, he contends that "Men are imperfect," and "[t]en millions of imparfect men won't make one parfect man." This self-educated man of the people then points out that the redistribution of land advocated by the lecturer would necessarily involve a violation of the Constitution itself and overthrow the principles enshrined there, which are "something stronger than the people." In his unassuming way, Hall sounds remarkably like James Madison, who wrote in the *Federalist* that "there is no just government" where a man's property "is violated by the arbitrary seizures of one class of persons for the service of the rest."

However flawed *The Redskins* may be in conception, Cooper's argument is a reasoned defense against the threat of such arbitrary seizures. Especially impressive is the manner in

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which he contrives to expose the fraudulence of the anti-rent Indians' claim to represent the legacy of the aboriginal possessors of the land. As Reeve Huston suggests, the anti-rent tribes drew heavily on the popular mythology of the "vanishing Indian" who had been unjustly robbed of his homeland. By appropriating Indian costume, the anti-rent Indians were able to propagate a fictitious but popular claim that their "title" to possession of the land was somehow superior to the landlords', and that they were simply "returning" to reclaim their ancient home from those who had dispossessed them. This fiction is stripped of its power to persuade when Cooper introduces into the novel a band of real Indians, a group of venerable chieftains of the Six Nations who have trekked a thousand miles from their exile on the prairie to pay homage to the ancient Susquesus, an Indian who has been attached to the Littlepage family for over 70 years. Susquesus's great secret, we learn, is that he was once a respected Onondaga chief who had left his tribe after refusing honorably to abrogate the rights of one of his warriors when he could easily have done so. The warrior in question had captured a young and beautiful squaw, and, by tribal custom, she was his property. But she favored Susquesus, who longed to bring her into his own wigwam. His popularity and authority ensured that he could have served his selfish interest without interference, but, in the end, he chose to uphold the law of possession.

Susquesus's story is revealed in one of the novel's final scenes with great oratorical flourish, as the Littlepages and a band of some 200 anti-rent Indians who have besieged their property listen in rapt attention. The reader is to understand that, when the pseudo-Indians abandon their intentions of doing some further violence to the property (having already burnt down the barn), it is out of shame. Though hiding their dishonest faces in "calico bags," even they are not so debased as to fail to recognize the moral superiority of the ancient Susquesus, who refuses to recognize them as warriors: "When they take a scalp," he proclaims, "it is because they are a hundred, and their enemies one." However implausible the *mise en scène*, the moral point is transparent. These false Indians have not kept their word; they have, in good faith, entered into agreements with their paleface landlords but now wish to violate their oaths and take the land for themselves. Susquesus recalls with anguish how the red men were driven off the land that, "far and near, was ours." The same "wicked spirit" that dispossessed the Indian now seeks to "drive off the pale face chiefs." But there is, he admits, a difference. The original dispossession was accomplished by superior strength, a rough justice that the red man can accept. This second dispossession is being effected by the weak, whose dishonesty "dishonor[s] the red men."

It is quite true, of course, that, in this denouement, Cooper cleverly exploits the same myth of the "noble savage" that served his anti-rent opponents so well. However, the myth makes for an effective literary device, and the underlying moral has its force. Unfortunately, Cooper's fictitious victory over the forces of anti-rentism was not to be realized in reality. In 1847, the Whig candidate John Young was elected governor of New York with substantial anti-rent support. Although, in order to appease party moderates, he had promised not to pardon a group of anti-rent Indians who had been jailed on charges ranging from murder to crimes against property, he quickly succumbed to the "tyranny of numbers" (after anti-rent militants sent him petitions bearing some 11,000 signatures) and issued the pardons. Shortly thereafter, he pushed for a resolution in the state legislature that would allow the attorney general to "inquire" into the legality of the landlords' titles if he were presented with any "just doubt" of their validity. While this resolution prevented any wholesale seizure of properties, it did open the way to years of litigation that bankrupted the landlords and forced them to sell off their estates. And in most cases, it was not tenant farmers who then took possession of the land, but high-risk speculators who, in turn, sold it to those same farmers at prices (and rates of interest) well above what their former landlords had demanded. ©

The Intrepid Traveller

by Sara Hill

X-rays of the heart
In nuclear winter
Reveal no embolism.

The numbness beyond pain,
The pulse beyond loss
So tranquilly comes

That in the heart's
Forsaken chambers is a harmony
Beyond the quaver

Of violin strings,
And colours of such saturation,
They cease to bleed.

The heart starts—
But as a maiden in a strange space
Leaps at mirrored-image.

If winter wastes what's left
Of the blood-bypassed heart,
And the foot that at leaf fall too swiftly turned,

Foot no more can heed
What heart no more commands;
But both ride the frozen currents

Of summer memory and blessed habit
Back to the well-worn path.
Hell is the intrepid traveller

That never seems to lead,
But follows quietly along,
Carrying your suitcase.

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The New Plan for Iraq

War With Iran?

by Joseph E. Fallon

When President Bush announced, in a televised speech, that he was planning to deploy 21,500 additional troops to Iraq, he added an ominous aside:

> Succeeding in Iraq also requires defending its territorial integrity and stabilizing the region in the face of extremist challenges. This begins with addressing Iran and Syria. These two regimes are allowing terrorists and insurgents to use their territory to move in and out of Iraq. Iran is providing material support for attacks on American troops. We will disrupt the attacks on our forces. We'll interrupt the flow of support from Iran and Syria. And we will seek out and destroy the networks providing advanced weaponry and training to our enemies in Iraq.

In light of the provocative actions the Bush administration has taken over the past year, these words cannot easily be dismissed as mere saber-rattling.

In March 2006, the State Department created an Office of Iranian Affairs, which, along with the Pentagon's new Iranian Directorate, is tasked with aggressively promoting regime change in Iran. Among those advising the Iranian Directorate are three former associates of the Pentagon's defunct Office of Special Plans—the same group that promoted the Iraq war on the basis of false or misleading information: Abram N. Shulsky, the OSP's former director; John Trigilio, a Defense Intelligence Agency analyst; and Ladan Archin, an Iran specialist.

In the April 17, 2006, issue of the *New Yorker*, in an article entitled "The Iran Plans: Would President Bush go to war to stop Tehran from getting the bomb?" Seymour Hersh wrote that U.S. troops are already in Iran and are "in position to mark the critical targets with laser beams, to insure bombing accuracy and to minimize civilian casualties." His source in the Pentagon also claimed that we had already begun "working with minority groups in Iran . . . to 'encourage ethnic tensions' and undermine the regime."

Plans continued apace through the end of last year. On September 30, 2006, the Iran Freedom Support Act, which provides financing for activities that promote regime change in Iran, was signed into law. Then, in late 2006, President Bush changed security policy in Iraq from a "catch and release" program (whereby U.S. forces would secretly capture Iranian "agents" in the country and detain them for a few days) to ordering that Iranian "agents" in Iraq be captured and held indefinitely, or killed.

In an effort to disrupt Iran's economy, on January 9 of this year, the Bush administration imposed sanctions on Bank Sepah, Iran's fifth-largest state-owned financial institution, alleging it "is the financial linchpin of Iran's missile procurement network and has actively assisted Iran's pursuit of missiles capable of carrying weapons of mass destruction." Two days later, on January 11, U.S. troops violated international law protecting the immunity of diplomatic compounds, by storming Iran's consulate in Arbil in Iraqi Kurdistan and detaining five of its staff while confiscating computers and official documents.

In addition, significant military sea and air operations are now under way. To Iran's northwest, at the Incirlik Air Base in Turkey, the Pentagon has deployed F-16s that can deliver B61-11 nuclear bunker busters, which are theoretically capable of destroying Iran's underground nuclear facilities. To Iran's south, Patriot Air and Missile Defense Systems are now in place in Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain (where the U.S. Fifth Fleet, the naval arm of U.S. Central Command, is headquartered). The USS *Eisenhower* Strike Group is in the Persian Gulf, comprising the nuclear aircraft carrier *Dwight D. Eisenhower*, its Carrier Air Wing 7, Destroyer Squadron 28, the guided-missile cruiser USS *Anzio*, the guided-missile destroyers USS *Ramage* and USS *Mason*, and the attack submarine USS *Newport News*.

They are now being joined by the USS *Stennis* Carrier Strike Group, which consists of the nuclear aircraft carrier *John C. Stennis*, its Carrier Air Wing 9, Destroyer Squadron 21, the guided-missile cruiser USS *Antietam*, and the guided-missile destroyers USS *O'Kane*, USS *Preble*, and USS *Paul Hamilton*. The combined Carrier Air Wings of the two carrier strike groups allow air operations over a continuous 24-hour cycle. According to Flynt Leverett, former senior official in the CIA and the National Security Council, stationing two carrier strike groups in the Persian Gulf "provide[s] the necessary numbers and variety of tactical aircraft" for an attack against Iran.

In addition, the USS *Bataan* Expeditionary Strike Group, which consists of seven ships and includes helicopters and Harrier fighter jets, has been deployed to the Persian Gulf. A fourth flotilla of eight ships, the USS *Boxer* Expeditionary Strike Group, is nearby, in the Indian Ocean. Currently at sea and available for deployment to the Persian Gulf are USS *Nimitz* and three additional carrier strike groups: USS *Ronald Reagan*, USS *Harry S. Truman*, and USS *Theodore Roosevelt*.

Coordinating this military activity is the U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM), one of the Pentagon's five geographically demarcated unified commands. Spanning 3,600 miles east-west and 4,600 miles north-south, its Area of Responsibility is larger than the continental United States. Of particular note, therefore, is President Bush's decision to pass over highly qualified U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps Combat Arms officers and appoint Adm. William J. Fallon to head USCENTCOM. Over its 24-year history, USCENTCOM has always been commanded by a general from either the Army or the

Joseph E. Fallon writes from Rye, New York.

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Marine Corps—never an admiral. That is because USCENTCOM is a land-warfare command responsible for the land wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. At least initially, Admiral Fallon will likely be viewed by the staff as an outsider, and combat-arms officers will be wary of a Navy aviator leading Army operations. However, it is possible that Admiral Fallon was appointed not to lead land operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, for which he has limited experience, but to command the assembled naval forces in and around the Persian Gulf in a joint sea and air attack on Iran—an operation for which he is superbly qualified. Admiral Fallon gained extensive command experience in such operations in the Gulf War and Kosovo, and he is intimately familiar with the Persian Gulf region. As his official biography states, "He has served as Deputy Director for Operations, Joint Task Force, Southwest Asia in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia."

The Bush administration denies that insurgencies arise from, and are sustained by, local populations. Instead, it is convinced that an insurgency is dependent upon some other state.

With Admiral Fallon at the head of USCENTCOM and U.S. naval strike forces in the Persian Gulf, the Bush administration is in position to launch a massive air attack on Iran. The very magnitude of the likely area of attack ensures that it would not be a surgical strike. As *Time* reported in its September 17, 2006, issue,

> A Pentagon official says that among the known sites there are 1,500 different "aim points," which means the campaign could well require the involvement of almost every type of aircraft in the U.S. arsenal: Stealth bombers and fighters, B-1s and B-2s, as well as F-15s and F-16s operating from land and F-18s from aircraft carriers.

Given that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has refused to promise that the White House would consult Congress before attacking Iran, if there is to be an attack, the Bush administration may seek to provoke a Gulf of Tonkin incident. It could then claim that Iran fired the first shot, in order to justify launching a "retaliatory" attack. The immediate aim would be to force the Democratic-controlled Congress to provide all necessary funding for a war to destroy Iran's nuclear program and neutralize her military capabilities. In so doing, the Bush administration would hope that ensuing political instability would allow ethnic minorities (Arabs, Azeris, Baluchis, Kurds, and Turkmen) to dismember the state or opposition parties to overthrow the government—in other words, regime change.

Judging by U.S. air campaigns in North Vietnam and Yugoslavia—and, more recently, by Israel's attack on Lebanon—such an attack would result in significant civilian casualties, which could, in turn, unify Iranians in an outpouring of patriotic support for their government. It would be comparable to what occurred in this country following September 11. The Iranian opposition, ethnic secessionists, and political dissidents would be discredited as fifth columnists. And the Muslim world, from Morocco to Malaysia, would be inflamed against the United States.

What, then, is the purpose of increasing troop levels in Iraq by 21,500, if the President plans to attack Iran? The "Surge" is a political, not a military, action, designed to justify previous policy, show determination to remain in Iraq, and circumvent the recommendations of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group.

The overall failure in the strategy of the Bush administration, of which the "Surge" is but one example, is in its refusal to accept the concept of Fourth Generation Warfare—war between a state and a nonstate actor. The Bush strategy denies that insurgencies arise from, and are sustained by, local populations. Instead, the administration is convinced that an insurgency is dependent upon some other state. In the case of the Iraqi insurgency, that state is Iran. The Bush administration may believe that, by neutralizing Iran's military capabilities, it can defeat the Iraqi insurgents.

The assumption that Iran is sponsoring the insurgency in Iraq is false. First, the insurgents are Sunnis who seek to reestablish the political hegemony of the Sunni minority. Iran is Shiite and supports the right of the Shiite majority that we brought to power in Iraq. Iran is not going to arm Sunnis to suppress Shiites. Second, if Iran were arming Shiites to attack U.S. troops, they would be attacking U.S. troops. Instead, the Shiite militias are killing Sunnis. With the Shiites now in power in Iraq, the only way to foment a Shiite insurgency would be if we attacked Iran. Such an attack would be viewed by Iraqi Shiites as an assault on Shia Islam.

Even without a Shiite insurgency, the "Surge" plan has serious flaws. To begin with, an increase in troops to over 160,000—bringing us back to levels we have had in Iraq before—is no surge. Besides, if "victory" was beyond our reach with 250,000 troops on the ground (the original invasion force), it is not likely to be achieved with fewer—particularly if the additional troops are not being provided additional armored vehicles.

The primary focus of the "Surge" is to pacify Baghdad. However, in the past, when more troops were deployed to that city, violence only increased. The "Surge" doubles the number of U.S. troops for security operations in Baghdad. That brings the number of military personnel up to 15,000 for an operation that, according to the force ratios established by the U.S. Army Manual for Counterinsurgency, requires 120,000. According to the Bush strategy, the difference will be made up by Iraqi troops—Sunnis, Shiites, and Kurds. Yet Kurdish soldiers are refusing to be deployed to Baghdad, and, if Iran is attacked, Iraqi Shiite soldiers may well turn on U.S. troops.

Currently, U.S. troops rely on a supply line from Kuwait for virtually everything—food, fuel, ammo, and medicine. If Iran is attacked, that supply line will be cut—by a general Shiite uprising, armed Shiite militias, Iran's Revolutionary Guard, or all of the above. U.S. outposts would be overrun, and Baghdad, encircled, rendering a mass retreat (*à la* Saigon, 1975) impossible. At that point, the Bush administration will have run out of options. They would be unable to resupply the beleaguered troops or bring in additional troops and armor to end the siege quickly. Nor could they bomb their way to victory without killing U.S. troops along with the insurgents and civilians. Instead of Saigon, Baghdad would resemble Dien Bien Phu, 1954. c

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The Courage to Live

by Ewa Thompson

"Often the test of courage is not to die but to live."
—Vittorio Alfieri, *Oreste* (1785)

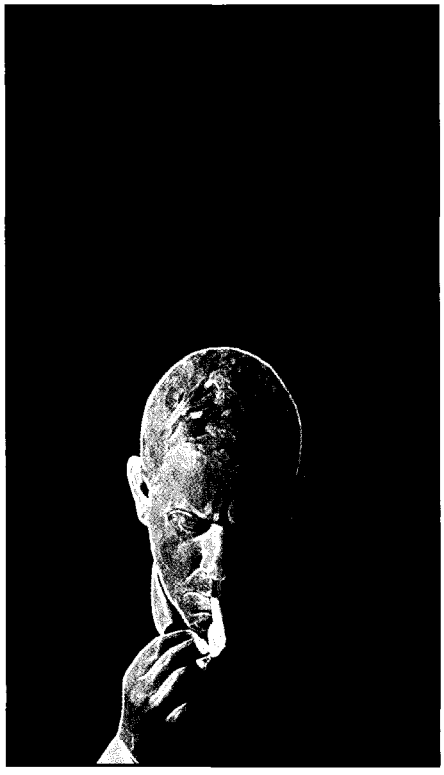
The Collected Poems: 1956-1998
by Zbigniew Herbert
New York: Ecco Press; 600 pp., $34.95

◆

This volume is the first complete English translation of Zbigniew Herbert's poetry—a cause for rejoicing. And, although Alissa Valles's translations are a bit gray, as if sprinkled with fine dust, they are invariably precise and never overstated. While there is more sonorousness in the original Polish, and I like some of the earlier translations by the Milosz-Scott-Carpenter teams, this volume's completeness weighs heavily in its favor. The notes, chronology, and index help navigation considerably.

Zbigniew Herbert, a Polish poet, died in 1998 of causes attributable to poverty. The T.S. Eliot Award for Creative Writing, which he gratefully received from the Ingersoll Foundation in 1995, brightened his final years somewhat, but it could not undo the circumstances in which he spent his youth and middle age. Poverty shortens lives in ways that are not always traceable. Score one more point for that great Darkness that came from the East.

Years ago, Leopold Tyrmand told me that Herbert should have received the Nobel Prize, and I heartily agreed. But there was no mighty society of friends standing behind him: He never lived near the centers of power and came from an unprestigious country. Still, he had a



following in America, and hundreds of people on American campuses recited his poetry; there was a Mr. Cogito Press (named after one of Herbert's poetic alter egos) somewhere in Oregon at one time; and his collections of poetry have been reviewed in all the journals that possess the correct zip codes. In Soviet-occupied Poland, he was one of the points of light that appear so unexpectedly and against all odds among Poles in all epochs of history. His literary debut was delayed until 1956, when he was 32, because he did not wish to enter a Devil's deal with the regime. His consecutive volumes of poetry were snatched from bookstores by Polish students the way that pop stars' CDs are in today's America. He was adored by the left and the right, and it is said that Adam Michnik—the leftist Polish intellectual (now a neocon) who, in the 1990's, did his best to destroy Herbert's reputation—once fell on his knees before him. After the suppression of Solidarity by the Moscow-controlled government of Poland in 1981, Herbert continued to publish in *Tygodnik Solidarność* (*Solidarity Weekly*). Angered by the fraternizing of the Polish neocons such as Michnik (who had moved from the leftist to the neocon position, just as many Americans did) with the ex-communists, he criticized them, and they retaliated devastatingly in Michnik's daily *Gazeta Wyborcza*, which, through the cat's paws of its writers, suggested that Herbert wrote himself out or even lost his marbles.

The necessity to go into these details illustrates the difficulty of writing about the great literary figures who are unsupported by common knowledge of their countries' literary and intellectual history. This is what Edward Said had in mind when he lamented the "orientalist" ways of Western intellectuals pontificating on countries whose language and history they do not know, instructing those who know even less. The texture of allusions, memories, connotations, and nuances can only be lamely recreated even by those who lived in the poet's country; here, I am trying to do precisely this.

How best then to describe Herbert to those who do not know him? Imagine T.S. Eliot conceiving *The Waste Land* and *Four Quartets* in a Soviet-controlled country, while being exposed to the "invigorating knowledge that we are alone" ("September 17," Herbert's poem referring to the Soviet Union's attack on Poland two weeks after the Nazi attack of September 1, 1939). Eliot had to come to terms with the Prufrocks, with typists who

Ewa Thompson is research professor of Slavic Studies at Rice University.

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"lay out food in tins," with "the women [who] come and go / talking of Michelangelo." Imagine him having to come to terms with total loss: "They who lost now dance with bells on their ankles . . . they gave up history and fell into the sloth of showcases" ("They Who Lost"). This is why "The Envoy of Mr. Cogito" (*Mr. Cogito*, 1974) is more profound than anything that can be found in Eliot: Greater suffering creates deeper knowledge.

In other words, Herbert is difficult to explain to the conservative Anglo audience. While he did make it to the *New York Times* and the *New York Review of Books*, he served there for many years as one of the "dissidents," to be paraded before liberal and enlightened America and then discarded for newer pursuits. In communist times, the dissidents "from over there" replaced Michelangelo in New York's casual party conversations. In such circumstances, the reception of Herbert's poetry was necessarily superficial: Beyond a few *oh*'s and *ah*'s, there was no chance for a deeper assimilation or academic analysis. It is not true that great poets need no interpreters. The incorporation of Shakespeare into the English language and thinking was a gradual process; it is doubtful that the *profanum vulgus* watching his plays in Elizabethan times fully grasped their greatness. To be incorporated into a culture, the great poet needs much attention. Many people have to ponder and rephrase his meanings. In the English language, Herbert has had no such army of facilitators, and, even in his native Poland, the urgent task of removing the rubble of Soviet colonialism has delayed many serious readings. To incorporate Herbert's insights into the English language the way Shakespeare's insights have been incorporated (although I am *not* placing an equation mark here) would take a host of dissertations, articles, books, and discussions. In their absence, the chances of Herbert transforming Anglophone thinking are slim. Yet my suggestion that he has this potential should alert readers that Alissa Valles's book is a treasure trove worth exploring. Herbert's vision of the world and the rhythm of his poetry are profoundly original, and his ability to infuse his readers with the courage to live is unmatched.

One could divide all poets into those whose words flow effortlessly and abundantly (Walt Whitman or, in Poland, Juliusz Słowacki—both Romantics) and those who drop words sparingly, as if in pain. Herbert (and Eliot) belong to the second category. This is evident in the volume *Hermes, Dog, and Star* (1957), where, in "A Knocker," the poet says:

> There are those who grow
> gardens in their heads . . .
>
> it's easy for them to write
> they close their eyes
> immediately schools of images
> stream down . . .
>
> my imagination
> is a piece of board
> my sole instrument
> is a wooden stick . . .
>
> I thump on the board
> and it prompts me
> with the moralist's dry poem.

Unlike the poets who have received the Nobel Prize since 1948 (when Eliot got his), Herbert distrusts metaphors and favors metonymies, and sometimes eschews both, achieving poetic effects with rhythm only. He writes "free" verse, with hardly any punctuation and using as few verbs as possible. His is a world of things—things that are. No poet makes us rediscover ordinary things better than Herbert—things such as tables, chairs, and beds, objects toward which we should feel gratitude, for they never fail us. "I have never observed a chair shift from one foot to another, or a bed rear on its hind legs," states the poet, "I suspect that objects do this from pedagogical considerations, to reprove us constantly for our instability" ("Objects"). The physical world on which Herbert lavished attention was contained in a three-room flat in a grim block of flats in southern Warsaw, where all the inconveniences of the multiple uses of the same room were clearly visible. Only Herbert's cat lived in luxury.

In *Study of the Object* (1961), "Pebble" is not a rehearsal of the Platonic essence, as a casual reader might conclude. It is a deeply Thomistic meditation on the phenomenon of being. The poems in this volume could have only been written in a country permeated—nay, saturated—with a Thomistic worldview. This is what distinguishes Poland from other European countries and makes it *sui generis*. Only in Poland has the Thomistic *Weltanschauung* become the bedrock of both artistic expression and public debates—such as they are, mutilated by colonialism and ignorance, but deeply Thomistic in their core, deeply committed to the premise that two plus two equals four; that discourse is not merely a human creation and therefore cannot be infinitely manipulated; that names are firmly attached to objects because there exists the One who told us He has a Name, and that Name is hallowed.

Poems invoking the name of Mr. Cogito abound. In "Mr Cogito and the imagination," the speaker declares that he has never trusted the imagination, and instead has adored tautologies: "a bird is a bird / slavery slavery / a knife a knife / death is death." This is a fundamentally Thomistic observation of a poet who, unlike T.S. Eliot, had to cope not only with the Prufrocks and evenings resembling patients etherized against the sky, but also with "the abrupt change / of life into archeology" when the poet takes long walks "down avenues of burned houses" and observes a city "without morning papers / without evening papers / [where] there is no / prison / clock / or water" ("Abandoned").

Herbert, as the chronicler of objects, easily moves from tables and chairs to the Dutch and Italian masters, to the still lifes painted by painters long dead, cathedrals built by builders unknown yet living in their designs. He is deeply immersed in the material world; he is a "materialist" in the sense in which Dostoyevsky's characters sometimes describe themselves as "materialist" (Prince Myshkin); by the same token, the Devil is an idealist. Herbert holds firm to the material world—not for him the parallel worlds of dreams invoked by some contemporary poets.

Herbert's poems proclaim the futility of manipulating language in ways that some contemporary philosophers take for granted. These poems confirm the existence of an area of thought to which the vulgarizers and the "flatteners" have no access. While the telling of untruths has been perfected in postmodern times and good writers have emerged that are no more than public-relations men, not all the territory has been conquered. Herbert's poems remind us that winning has many meanings, and that the most popular meaning is not necessarily the one we are looking for. In "What Mr. Cogito thinks of Hell" we read:

> Contrary to popular opinion [the lowest circle of hell] is not populated by despots, matricides, or those who lust after the flesh of others. It

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is a retreat for artists, full of mirrors, instruments, and paintings.

This defiance of the *Zeitgeist* also operates on a lower level. "Silk of a soul" describes a lover overwhelmed by what fellow poet Anna Akhmatova has called the desire to penetrate to the innermost depths of the beloved. In Herbert, the lover surreptitiously uses the open mouth of the sleeping beloved to peek inside. "I expected . . . a house by a lake great and silent." Instead, he catches sight of "a pair of silk stockings." Crushed, he will buy her these dreamed-of stockings but asks himself what will replace them: "Will it be something / which cannot be touched / even with one finger of a dream?"

The tone of Herbert's poetry is somber, as befits a man who has seen monsters go unpunished and straight shooters maligned and executed; one who has seen cities vanish, as Samarkand did under Ghenghis Khan. Even though he does not always write about these things, they are the silent background of his poetry. The more one reads Herbert, the clearer the contours become of the historical horrors he partly witnessed and partly heard about from other inhabitants of Mitteleuropa who lived under the Soviet military occupation for 50 long years.

There is also a playful side to Herbert: The equivalents of *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* are scattered throughout his *oeuvre*. I particularly like the short prose poems about "Bears," "Elephant," and "Hermes, Dog, and Star."

Herbert was a cult figure in Soviet-occupied Poland, somewhat like Walter Benjamin among American humanities professors in the first part of the 20th century. While the comparison may be unsavory, it does convey the worshipers' feeling that a certain body of writings will eventually destroy what the worshipers deem undesirable. Herbert's poetry provided Poles and others with the assurance that one is not alone, and that the victory of the powerful is not profound or permanent. Herbert belonged to the category of people for whom the awareness that this is so was enough. Yes, he did indulge in contempt. He never overcame this weakness of noble minds, and several of his poems speak of it.

A slew of books now exists about communist times in countries situated between Germany and Russia: Poland, the Baltics, Ukraine, Belarus, Rumania, Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic. Some of these books take on literary production under communism; others are histories based on the premise that only those who can write a history deserve a history. Thus, they use the most falsifying principle of selection—namely, group interest. To paraphrase Kevin Brennan, "Sovietologists of all political stripes [have been] given strong incentives to ignore certain facts and focus their interest in other areas." Toward the end of his life, Herbert became aware of this situation and tried to address it in *Epilogue to a Storm* (1998). The poems in this section of Valles's book require the support of the texture of references mentioned earlier, or at least exceptional attention to detail. They express the dying poet's gentle disagreement with much that passes for "the history of the communist period in Central and Eastern Europe": the elbowing out and dropping into the memory hole of inconvenient facts. Like Paul Ricoeur, Herbert knows that certain events in history are overremembered, whereas others are underremembered, and he whispers this knowledge into the reader's ear.

In that regard, it should be stated that—unlike his more famous contemporary, Czesław Miłosz, and the poet who wrote the introduction to this volume, Adam Zagajewski—Herbert is a deeply committed Polish patriot. He takes seriously the "imagined community" of people, ideas, strivings, and suffering that together make what Benedict Anderson has called, in a less famous phrase, "an attractive ideology . . . that encourages good behavior." Herbert's invocations of the gnawing pain of loss, misrepresentation, and honors denied to the dead will appeal to those who cherish a similar tissue of remembrances about the American South. To them, I recommend one of Herbert's best-known poems, "The Envoy of Mr. Cogito," which begins with the following advice: "Go where the others went before to the dark boundary / for the golden fleece of nothingness your last reward." This poem cannot be reduced to an existentialist exclamation, because existentialism was born in the secure coffee shops of Western Europe and not among the corpses of Mitteleuropa.

Speaking of Mitteleuropa, the rereading of Herbert made me realize how profoundly differently Poles and Germans (please, these are metonymies) have responded to dispossession and loss, to becoming *Vertriebenen*, as the German saying has it. While the Germans have formed a Preussische Treuhand and noisily demand the return of their properties from the impoverished Poles to whom they have caused indescribable losses, Poles prefer quiet mourning that is miles away from making any demands on the impoverished Ukrainians. (The Germans lost Breslau/Wrocław to Poland, whereas the Poles lost Lwów/Lviv to the Ukraine.) Herbert was born in Lwów, and in one of his last poems ("In the city"), he discreetly laments: "In the borderland city I'll never see again / there's a winged stone light and immense . . . / in the faraway city I'll never see again / there is water that's heavy and nourishes / he who gives you a drink of that water." The tone of Herbert's poem makes it clear that, though an expellee, he realizes that "my city. . . doesn't exist on any map."

The first poem in the collection contains an epigraph from Juliusz Słowacki added by translators Milosz and Scott: "No time to grieve for roses, when the forests are burning." Being torn between his predilection to contemplate roses and the moral duty to ring the bells for the dying forests, Herbert learned to do both. His "Odes to the Confederate Dead" encourage us to live; his meditations on God's world make us see it anew. In spite of his somberness, he is a nourishing poet. ©

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Mysteries of the Mockingbird

by Mark Tooley

Mockingbird: A Portrait of Harper Lee
by Charles J. Shields
New York: Henry Holt & Company;
324 pp., $25.00

◆

Harper Lee's novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* has sold over 30 million copies since its publication in 1960. Hardly a high-school student in America over the last 40 years has graduated without having read the 1930's-era drama of a small-town Southern lawyer who defends an innocent black man accused of rape by a white woman. And many nonreaders have seen the 1962 film version, starring Gregory Peck as the reassuringly patriarchal Atticus Finch, the novel's irrepressibly venerable widower, whose story is narrated through the voice of his adoring young daughter.

The book was Lee's first—and her last. Fame exploded upon her, as millions of copies sold within the first year, culminating in a Pulitzer Prize. After an avalanche of media interviews, book tours, and speeches, and an invitation to provide on-site assistance for Gregory Peck's movie, after 1964, the introverted Lee largely retreated from public life. Now 81 years old, and still living mostly in her hometown of Monroeville, Alabama, Lee has surprisingly appeared at a few public events over the past year and even wrote a short letter to Oprah Winfrey's magazine, O. However, Lee still avoids commenting on her novel and shuns almost all interviews.

Thus, in writing *Mockingbird: A Portrait of Harper Lee*, biographer Charles Shields was unable to talk with Lee or her immediate family. Nor was he granted access to any of her papers. Still, his book is an entertaining attempt to examine the mysteries of *Mockingbird* and its author. Shields does not fully explain Lee's preoccupation with privacy or her failure to write another book. But he does offer plausible theories, backed up by four years of research and 600 interviews with people connected to Lee or her novel.

Lee is wealthy, of course, but lives unpretentiously, sharing a house with her 95-year-old sister, Alice Lee, who is Alabama's oldest practicing female attorney and who still functions as Harper's unofficial spokesman. The two sisters seem to enjoy the normal social life of two elderly Southern spinsters. They eat out frequently, carefully taking turns in picking up the check. They mingle routinely with their friends and neighbors of many decades. And they have both remained active in the First United Methodist Church of Monroeville, in which they grew up, and to which their father, Amasa Coleman Lee, devoted much of his life.

Old Mr. Lee, upon whom the fictional Atticus Finch was based, was a rock-hard Methodist and a lay leader of the congregation. He eschewed liquor, led prayer meetings, preached sermons, listened wearily to ministers who strayed from orthodox teachings, and was a proponent of 19th-century-style Methodist civic righteousness in his community. A successful businessman, newspaper owner, state legislator, and attorney, Mr. Lee wore three-piece suits and carried a gold pocket watch, just as Gregory Peck would portray him.

Amasa Lee was no liberal. He did not lend his voice to the cause of civil rights for blacks until late in his life, during the 1950's. In the 40's, Lee confronted and ultimately helped to force out of his Methodist church a pastor who preached racial equality and labor-union rights from the pulpit. Such sermons were political and (therefore) inappropriate, he believed. Respected by both blacks and whites, Mr. Lee opposed cruelty and any overt injustice. In 1919, he unsuccessfully defended two black men accused of murder. A jury found them guilty, they were hanged, and their bodies were mutilated; Amasa Lee never accepted another criminal case.

Devoted to his son and three daughters, Mr. Lee was married to Frances Cunningham Lee, who suffered from a "nervous disorder" and was obese, moody, and difficult. Mr. Lee stoically endured, outliving his younger wife by 15 years and never remarrying. Harper Lee attached herself to her beloved father. In her novel, the family's mother goes completely unmentioned. The filmmakers felt obliged at least to reference her death.

Mr. Lee wanted Harper to follow him into the profession of law, as her older sister had done. A tomboy and an affectionate rebel, Harper resisted, opting instead to move to New York, work at odd jobs, and make literary contacts. Well-heeled friends financed a one-year sabbatical for her, during which she wrote her book. Its immediate success shocked and amused old Mr. Lee, who had thought his daughter's literary ambitions highly esoteric.

In preparation for the movie, Gregory Peck journeyed to Monroeville to meet the elderly but still courtly Mr. Lee. Both the actor and the small-town lawyer were charmed by the encounter. Amasa Lee died before the movie was finished. Other Monroeville residents believed that Peck had captured many of Mr. Lee's eccentric ways, including the manner in which he often caressed his pocket watch. Harper Lee wept when she first saw Peck in costume on the movie set; he even had her father's "little paunch."

An important feature of the Harper Lee story is the long friendship she cultivated with the flamboyant and self-destructive Truman Capote, who had spent part of his childhood as a neighbor to the Lee family. Already an established author in New York in the 1950's, Capote helped Lee make literary contacts. Lee, in turn, served as Capote's research assistant while he was writing *In Cold Blood*, the sordid tale of the murder of the Clutter family in Garden City, Kansas. Small-town Kansas would not likely have opened up to the dwarfish and effeminate Capote without the reassuring presence of a very normal and unpretentious Harper Lee.

During her research, which included a tour of the Clutters' home (the site of the murders), Lee found the victims to be a parody of her own family. They were devout Methodists, led by a strong and successful father. Mr. Clutter was as much a force in his local church as Mr. Lee had been at First Methodist. But where Amasa Lee had been humble and warm, the evidence persuaded Harper that Mr. Clutter had been cold and controlling—and his family, consequently, emotionally dysfunctional. The depictions of Jesus neatly framed in each room of the Clutter house struck her as sanctimonious. However, these observations were withheld from *In Cold Blood*, as Capote was hesitant to cast aspersions on the victims of a terrible crime.

Predictably, Capote was ungrateful for Lee's help, resented her subsequent success, and devoted years to fostering their estrangement. In response, Harper declined to attend Capote's celebrity-studded Black and White Ball, New York's premier social event of the 1960's. But she stubbornly maintained contact with Capote until his various addictions finally destroyed him in 1984. Capote never published another book after his own

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triumph with the mesmerizing *In Cold Blood*, which also became a movie. But whereas Capote's inability to achieve further success only fueled his self-destructive spiral, Lee seems to have handled her own literary silence with equanimity.

Mostly, Harper Lee seems to have remained an introverted but charming Southern lady, a bit of a maverick who has never been terribly concerned about what the world thought of her. Except in her choice of a profession, and despite her attempts at rebelliousness, she never really strayed from her father's path. She still lives in his house and attends and supports the church to which he devoted himself. She even contributed toward the construction of a new education wing and chapel for the church, which includes a statue of John Wesley. Old Mr. Lee would have been pleased.

Unlike her teetotaling father, Lee does imbibe. At least one of Shields' sources speculates that Lee's drinking helped prevent the completion of another book, but Shields does not attempt to prove this. Rather, he concludes that Harper Lee surmised she could never equal the achievements of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, so she never really tried. Her own emotional serenity did not require any further public acclaim.

Mark Tooley is the director of the United Methodist Committee (UMAction) of the Institute on Religion and Democracy.

An American Life

by Catharine Savage Brosman

Thirteen Moons
by Charles Frazier
New York: Random House;
424 pp., $26.95

◆

It is not impossible, merely difficult, for the author of a highly praised first novel to produce a second worthy of its predecessor. Perhaps paucity of imagination is responsible for the failure of many second novels; the writer emptied his quiver the first time or got lucky with a flash-in-the-pan and should not have tried again. In *Thirteen Moons*, Charles Frazier shows that he had at least one more novel in him after *Cold Mountain*, which won the National Book Award in 1997 and an award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, was on the *New York Times* best-seller list, and was the basis for a film. Readers who liked *Cold Mountain* may admire this new work equally; those less pleased are unlikely to be won over.

Thirteen Moons, a first-person retrospective account, relates the life of a Southern white man, Will Cooper, from his adolescence early in the 19th century until very old age in the 20th. The main historical framework is consonant with factual accounts. Frazier lists sources in a brief note, acknowledging that, though the work is fiction, the narrator bears some resemblance to one William Holland Thomas, and a figure called Charley, to the historical Tsali. Like Cooper, the novel is tough and sinewy. As such, it is a man's novel but will appeal also to women who like men's novels. The setting is the southern Appalachians, chiefly North Carolina (recognizable but named rarely); occasionally, the action moves to Charleston, Washington City, and westward. The story is not Cooper's alone; he is connected to the Cherokee Indians, both inside the Nation and on its fringes, and to the mixed-bloods living near them.

An orphan, Will Cooper is bound over legally at age 12 by his uncle and aunt (who also steal his land) to an old tradesman needing an assistant to run his trade post on the edge of Cherokee territory. Will's choice is to accept his indenture, not escape. The learning he acquired in school stands him in good stead, and his hard work and talents enable him to do well for his master. At the latter's death, Will buys his freedom and the store from the heir, then acquires other stores and considerable land. He teaches himself the law, argues cases, and becomes particularly adept in matters of land titles. He also acquires an adoptive father, Bear, a Cherokee living outside Indian territory. Bear's considerable knowledge of the world beyond, acquired through the Cherokee syllabary and with Cooper's assistance and encouragement, might be considered unusual, but, contrary to some critics' implications, neither it nor his superior practical skills and sage advice make him an unconvincing cardboard character. Cooper's loyalty to Bear and his clan is strong. His devotion goes also to a woman named Claire, whom he meets first when, a mere girl, she is thrust into his life bizarrely by the wealthy mixed-blood Featherstone. Her story runs close to his without joining it permanently. Featherstone is a negative father figure, a rival whom Will both respects and resents. Will's life journey is bound up with all three of these figures and with the entire tribe, whose spokesman he becomes in their vain struggle to avoid the Removal and what would be called the Trail of Tears.

Thus, the book touches squarely on the awful topics appropriated and distorted by the multiculturalists. Frazier's approach does not, however, involve tropistic obeisance to contemporary dogmas of white guilt, native superiority, and so on. His is an historical novel, directed toward presenting the 19th century as lived experience and eschewing today's commonplaces as inadequate for interpreting the past. Identity, moreover, is not a simple thing, as Cooper observes. When Cooper assesses blame, it is judicious, and, if his view is that the Indians are generally victims of the whites who decide their fate, the judgment is founded on his observations and experiences and made dispassionately. Violence has been exerted on many peoples, he notes; Cherokees and Creeks fought brutally long before Europeans arrived, and Appalachian Scots still lament Culloden. Will acknowledges that he, too, has failed his fellow men—by owning black slaves, for instance. The choice is often between two wrongs: To prevent a worse outcome, Bear and Cooper help hunt down some fugitive Indians, whose story ends very badly. Frazier views the question of Yankees through the lens of the unreconstructed. Will scorns Northerners before the war—and even more afterward—for their single-minded greed, exploitation of the hapless, and oppression of the defeated. Though his censure of Reconstruction will be viewed by some as tendentious, the cruelty and moral depravity of so many who decided the fate of the region and profited unduly from it are demonstrable.

As a consequence of his position in Bear's clan, Cooper goes to Washington as a lobbyist, later as a senator. The federal city, where the principal forces are money and power (each begetting the other), honesty is almost unknown, and corruption is everywhere, is not without resemblance (minus the mud in the streets) to today's capital. Andrew Jackson's campaign to deport the Cherokees from the Nation rivals recent federal manipulations as a piece of strong arming. Despite well-founded arguments made by Cooper and others, Jackson's will prevails, and even a Supreme Court decision

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favoring the Indians is useless. Whereas his efforts on behalf of the Nation are futile, Will defends successfully the rights of Bear and his clan to remain in the mountains because, thanks to him, their privately held land is protected by valid deeds. His difficult decision not to follow Claire when she goes into exile with Featherstone is not the idealistic act of a knight errant (although he does read the medieval *Knight of the Cart*) but that of a man bending to circumstance, meeting a greater need than his own and hers.

Frazier has a vigorous style, its energy arising from a blend of short and long sentences, pithiness in expression, variety in syntax, lexical richness, apt metaphors, and directness of speech and thought. Within the principal story are countless other tales and anecdotes, which are colorful, revealing, well recounted. There is clearly an attempt to recreate something of 19th-century Southern speech and written prose (letters and reports), illustrating variously coarseness and refinement, even erudition. (Many men and women then were readers and looked upon great authors as models, not nuisances or oppressors.) In such a literate work, it is unfortunate to find bits of today's diction ("down side") and errors and inconsistencies in the narrator's usage and grammar (*as far as* used as a preposition and the colloquial use of *like* as a conjunction, though, elsewhere, *as if* appears, followed by the subjunctive). Perhaps Frazier wished to avoid the appearance of elitism; perhaps he wrote hastily and the editorial staff missed lapses or forced popular usage upon the text, for the expected mass audience. Random House is ultimately to be faulted.

Unlike blasé minimalist fiction, slick suburban stories, and the cheap filth so abundant in American publishing now, *Thirteen Moons* has both breadth and depth worthy of thoughtful readers; it is literary, while not affected, and often exposes the grain of the human condition. Its plot features can draw in those desiring a good story. If fiction may legitimately aim to evoke a previous period, even with inevitable shortcomings in understanding and execution, one must acknowledge the achievement here. All such historical fiction tends to the romantic. Wishing not to distort the past by idealizing it, Cooper declines to "look back at Bear's people from the perspective of this modern world and see them as changeless and pure, authentic people in ways impossible for anybody to be anymore." Yet he cannot avoid feeling regret for his earlier years and for ways, people, and wilderness now gone. The nostalgia that informs the entire work is appropriate. Good fiction is a way of knowing, for author and readers—in this case, offering experience of the past and the wise reflection that America was once, and could have been, a better place.

Catharine Savage Brosman is poetry editor for Chronicles.

"A Pure American Type of a Rather Rare Species"

by Srdja Trifkovic

Dean Acheson: A Life in the Cold War
by Robert L. Beisner
New York: Oxford University Press; 800 pp., $35.00

◆

Dean Gooderham Acheson was born in Middletown, Connecticut, on April 11, 1893, into a stable world of which Europe was the center and where America was poised to attain hemispheric dominance. That world's certainties were shattered in the trenches of Northern France, but the shock was less profound among America's northeastern aristocracy—to which Acheson belonged by birth and temperament—than among its European counterparts.

America was spared melancholy self-doubt for another half-century, and young Acheson's disposition reflected its absence. Tall and striking in appearance, elegant in dress and polished in manner, he exuded the quiet self-confidence that used to come naturally to the alumni of Groton, Yale, and Harvard Law School. By the early 1920's, Acheson was a well-placed young lawyer, blessed with "the knowledge that one has been tested and that the gods have looked favorably." A decade later, suitably married and with three children, Acheson was on partnership track in a leading Washington law firm. He could have completed a solid but undramatic life, ending it as a Supreme Court justice or president of an Ivy League school.

Robert Beisner's major biography is short on the reasons Acheson chose public service over law—the first two thirds of Acheson's life are covered in a mere dozen pages—and exhaustive on the service itself. This imbalance is the book's only real flaw. Too early, the author presents us with the mature man in his prime, pursuing a career in appointed officialdom, taking positions on issues, making allies and enemies. What made the man tick is barely hinted at. A summer spent building railroads in northern Canada when Acheson was 19 gets a brief paragraph; a trip to Japan after his graduation from Yale, not even a full line. As a student, he has a political argument with his father and is banished from home for a year, but we do not learn what their disagreement was about. More significantly, Beisner attributes Acheson's early and enduring commitment to the Democratic Party to five factors—his father's paternalistic sympathy for "the common man," the influence of his mentor Felix Frankfurter, his friendship with Louis Brandeis, his firm's connections, and his opposition to protectionism—but these are merely listed, and their relative weight is not assessed.

Acheson's first foray into government came in 1933 with a brief stint as undersecretary and acting secretary of the treasury. It ended in a noisy dispute with President Franklin D. Roosevelt over the price of gold and currency policy. Acheson's objections were justified, and, although he acted as a man of principle, he did so rashly, causing public embarrassment for FDR. Acheson then returned to his old firm, now as a partner, but soon grew disenchanted with the corporate regimen. Having tasted, however briefly, the "rare meat" of political power (as Frankfurter observed), he found it "painful to return to the hardtack of the law." He despised Roosevelt ever after, but the episode taught him the necessity of helping presidents protect their prestige—a lesson that he was not to forget while serving Roosevelt's successor as secretary of state.

The story of that service evokes the old theme of a plodding master and his effortlessly superior servant, but Harry Truman was no Bertie Wooster. He was respectful of Acheson's worldly eloquence yet unawed by it, telling him, "You know, twenty guys would make a better Secretary of State than you, but I don't know them. I know you." Acheson was no Jeeves, either. He knew that avoiding condescension to the Missourian autodidact was essential to his chosen career. He would nev-

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er seek elective office, yet he enjoyed the "rare meat" too much to risk a repetition of 1933. To gain and keep Truman's full confidence was the only way to savor the dish. That demanded tactful patience and occasional brown-nosing (*e.g.*, rushing to meet Truman at Union Station on his return from Missouri in November 1948), and neither came naturally to Acheson. His ability to cultivate his relationship with the President, a key theme that Beisner develops in detail, resulted in Acheson's "success at helping change Truman from a man at sea in diplomacy to a confident leader who knew his secretary of state to be loyal, able, and valued abroad."

Another result was Acheson's ability to influence U.S. foreign policy more profoundly than any other secretary of state in the past century, Henry Kissinger included. In his almost four years as undersecretary, and another four years as secretary, of state (1945-53), Acheson effectively copresided over America's transformation into a superpower with global commitments. He helped develop an array of complex policies, entities, and instruments supporting those commitments, starting with the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan and culminating in the creation of NATO, the rearmament of Germany, and the decision to intervene in Korea.

Six decades later, it is tempting to blame Acheson for having been a key architect of today's American Empire, a malevolent creation that has morphed into a threat to this country's identity and a disruptive menace abroad. The man deserves to be judged in the context of the dilemmas and challenges of his own time, concerning which we must ask: Was the Soviet Union, in the late 1940's, an aggressive, expansionist power bent on global domination? Moreover, was George Kennan's assessment of Moscow's intentions in the Long Telegram of 1946 the correct one?

Starting with William Appleman Williams' *Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, the answer prevalent in the American academy has been in the negative, or at least ambivalent. The revisionists have held that America had always been prone to empire building and reflexively anticommunist, while Stalin—intimidated by the crude signal sent by Hiroshima and Nagasaki—was acting defensively, and in line with Russia's traditional geopolitical concerns.

The revisionists' failure to grasp the role of the Soviet leaders' worldview in the origins and subsequent conduct of the Cold War is on par with the refusal of many contemporary Western analysts to come to terms with the problem of Islam. In both cases, these aggressive actions and hostile impulses may, in part, have been induced by the need for security, or in reaction to American power, arrogance, and specific policies. The root problem, however, is a global ideology that blends religion and politics, whose impetus to expand and dominate abides irrespective of the actions of others, making it impervious to appeasement.

The material that has been made available from the Soviet archives since 1991 proves that Kennan was presciently correct in his assessment, and that the New Left revisionists are wrong. Now we know that Stalin's paranoid personality, his acceptance of violence as a legitimate means of pursuing "progress," and his absolute control at home made the Cold War inevitable regardless of American actions. Even had he been motivated by a rational quest to ensure "security" for his expanded domain, he would not have stopped short of seeking absolute security, just as a jihadist cannot stop short of turning every last square inch of the *Dar al Harb* into the *Dar al Islam*.

Acheson's evolution into a Cold Warrior did not occur overnight; Beisner dates it with finality to the second half of 1947. The paradigm shift in U.S. foreign policy that occurred after 1945 had demanded a new conceptual framework and an abiding commitment—not to the creation of a global empire but to the limited goal of coping with the malignant adversary in the Kremlin. America's response, Acheson concluded, demanded the creation of "situations of strength" along the Soviet periphery—above all, in Western Europe—to deter aggression and to create the preconditions necessary for negotiations. He and Kennan subsequently disagreed on the right mix of strength and diplomacy (Kennan came to resent the "militarization" of his own views), but not on the essence of the threat itself.

Acheson's Eurocentric instincts and his unconcealed disdain for what is now known as the Third World (he memorably described Africa as "dark and delirious") had served him well in setting his priorities. Beisner convincingly argues that Acheson was justified in resisting enormous pressure from the China lobby to continue supporting Chiang even when his cause started looking hopeless. An escalating entanglement on the Mainland would have drained American resources at a critical time for Europe, and Acheson sensed that Stalin would have liked nothing better. A communist China, even one that included Formosa, would be a nuisance; a communist Europe, however, would have been a catastrophe.

Acheson's abiding lack of interest in, and dislike of, Asia (the very thought of India gave him "the creeps") may have contributed to the biggest blunder of his career (*pace* Beisner). By casually omitting South Korea from the U.S. defense perimeter in a Press Club speech in January 1950, he sent the wrong signal to Kim Il Sung and his mentors—as dangerously wrong as that conveyed by Amb. April Glaspie to Saddam Hussein in June 1990, when she told the Iraqi dictator that "we have no opinion on the Arab-Arab conflicts, like your border disagreement with Kuwait."

Acheson later stubbornly insisted that nothing he said had "fooled the Russians one bit." Nevertheless, his lingering unease about the episode may have stiffened his resolve when the attack from the North came six months later. "Both Truman and Acheson went to war in 1950 to defend U.S. prestige," writes Beisner, "a vital source of strength in conducting foreign policy." Their resolve helped stabilize the Cold War divide. From June 1950 to the fall of the Berlin Wall, the communists inspired and funded countless insurgencies and "national liberation movements" all over the world—Malaya, Cuba, Congo, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Angola, Nicaragua—but no outright military onslaughts across the divide.

Acheson's latent snobbery was the root cause of his other major blunder: his misguided support for Alger Hiss. This damaged his reputation and undermined the State Department's credibility at a difficult time. His grandiloquent line to the press from January 1950, "I do not intend to turn my back on Mr. Hiss," would haunt him until the end of his life. "I knocked myself out," he admitted to a reporter in 1969. "[A]n element of pride entered into this."

That same "element" was on display at a closed session of the Senate Appropriations Committee on August 30, 1950. His old enemy, Sen. Kenneth Wherry (R-NE), wagged his finger across the narrow table at him, whereupon Acheson rose to his feet and told him not to shake his "dirty finger in my face":

Wherry "bellowed that he would,

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and he did." When Acheson started a roundhouse swing at the Nebraskan, [former Princeton guard and State Department legal advisor Adrian] Fisher saved his skin, wrapping Acheson in his arms, pulling him down, and saying, "Take it easy, Boss; take it easy." . . . On his way out, Acheson told a reporter he was "going home for a stiff drink."

The urge to give it to someone "right on the jaw" used to add color and spice to politics in Washington when it was still a sleepy Southern town. It is lacking in today's imperial capital, dominated as it is by think-tank ideologues, spin masters, pollsters, and sensitivity-trained speechwriters.

Srdja Trifkovic is Chronicles' *foreign-affairs editor.*

The Better Way

by Herbert Arthur Scott Trask

Winter's Bone: A Novel
by Daniel Woodrell
New York: Little, Brown and Company; 193 pp., $22.99

◆

The Missouri Ozarks are the western outpost of Appalachia. The hills are not as high as their elder brothers to the east, but they plunge down into narrow, labyrinthine valleys, where streams of cool, green water run. The surrounding soil is mostly shallow and full of rocks, with open spaces so small that vegetable gardens are the only farming. Those hills that have not been denuded of their timber are covered in lush and beautiful hardwood forests. In the summer, they are almost impenetrable; once inside, there is deep shade and a cacophony of sound—a chorus of cicadas, the *thump-thump-thump* and wild cries of pileated woodpeckers. In the winter, the trees are stripped bare by ice storms, and the forest floor is carpeted with oak leaves.

The Ozarks are beautiful, but one can feel claustrophobic and trapped by them, and their human communities are isolated and somewhat cut off from the larger world. They remain a poor rural backwater inhabited by fiercely independent and often violent clans. Today, the chief occupation of the men appears to be growing marijuana and cooking methamphetamine. The chief means of escape is joining the Army.

Daniel Woodrell is from this place, and he lives there still. Those who have not read his books may yet know something of his work. The excellent screenplay for Ang Lee's underappreciated 1999 film *Ride With the Devil*, about a band of Missouri Confederate guerrillas, was adapted, often word for word, from his excellent 1987 novel *Woe to Live On*. He has set his latest story in the coldest part of an Ozark winter when clouds can be seen "splitting on distant peaks, dark rolling bolts torn around the mountain tops to patch the blue sky with grim," and "the bringing wind rattled the forest, shook limb against limb."

The bleak winter landscape mirrors the ordeal of Woodrell's heroine, 16-year-old Ree Dolly, whose father has disappeared, whose mother has gone crazy, and whose two younger brothers now look to her for provision, protection, and permanence. Woodrell's lyrical and evocative sentences quicken both physical and mental worlds. "The snow fell first in hard little bits, frosty white bits blown sideways to pelt Ree's face as she raised the ax, swung down, raised it again, splitting wood while being stung by cold flung from the sky." "Coyotes howled past dawn, howled from far crags and ridges and down the valley to the end of the rut road where the school bus stopped." "In the house she slept, and when she woke the sun was red falling west and everybody wanted food."

Sometimes, all she has to feed Sonny and Harold are "oatmeal suppers," but there is episodic help from neighbors and family—and hunting. Ree teaches her brothers how to shoot rifles, then takes them into the woods in the early morning to pick off squirrels. "Ree and the boys sat with their backs propped up against a large fallen oak, butts on gathered leaves, boots in thin patches of snow. . . . The needed skill was silence."

The real drama begins when Ree learns from the deputy sheriff that her father, a skilled cooker of "crank" (meth), has used their house as collateral for a jail bond and is now missing. If he does not turn up in a few days, they will lose the house, its land and trees, and the family will be scattered. Were that to happen, Ree would fare the best, for she is only a year away from being old enough to join the Army, which has been her plan anyway. Instead, she decides to look for her dad, knowing the danger of asking questions of extended family who are likewise involved in the drug trade (and sometimes worse things) and knowing also that she has an easy way out. She chooses the harder, but better, way. Ree, it turns out, would rather stay home, care for her two brothers, and revel in the beauty of her wooded and rocky hills than patrol the sanguinary streets of Baghdad.

Writing of William Faulkner, Russell Kirk observed that

> the writer may write much more about what is evil than about what is good; and yet, exhibiting the depravity of human nature, he establishes in his reader's mind the awareness that there exist enduring standards from which we fall away; and that fallen nature is an ugly sight.

In Woodrell's Ozarks, even the land is fallen. Forests on private land have mostly been cut down. Ancient springs are poisoned. ("Stuff has leaked to the heart of the earth.") The soil is barren. Immorality abounds. Infidelity and drug abuse are rampant. There are few good jobs. Both community and family are dysfunctional, yet we cannot help noticing that it *is* a community—unlike exurban America, which is no community at all. We also cannot help noticing that, while Ree has to grow up too fast, more affluent American adolescents hardly grow up at all, and that, if her family suffers from material deprivation, wealthier families suffer from a deprivation that is normative and spiritual.

As in so much Southern fiction, that other, spiritual world is ever present. Before her mind broke and the parts scattered, Ree's mother would sometimes beat her with a rake while hung over and depressed after a night of that all-American pastime, "partying." But one day, an "unsmiling angel pointing from the tree tops" put an end to that. God may seem to have abandoned His world to the wickedness of men, but He hasn't. And a better world beckons. The boys ask Ree to describe Heaven: "Sandy. Lots of fun birds. Always sunny but never way hot."

Herbert Arthur Scott Trask lives and writes in the hills of the Missouri River country west of St. Louis, on the northeastern edge of the Ozarks.

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by Joe Ecclesia

Guts and the Grace of God

Your Excellency:

It's the lusty month of May, and you are doubtless zipping from parish to parish, dabbing chrism oil onto the foreheads of gawky teenagers. (Incidentally, would you ever consider restoring the slap on the cheek that once accompanied this rite? Several young people of my acquaintance could use one.)

As you and your driver cruise from Charlotte to Boone, from Winston-Salem to Franklin, perhaps you'll find the time to read the enclosed article from *Time*. "The Grassroots Abortion War" is set here in Asheville, my hometown and a city of your diocese. The article mentions Asheville's diversity (a few years back, *Rolling Stone* called Downtown Asheville "the freak capital of the United States"), the occasional cultural clashes, the local crisis pregnancy center, the Orange Street abortuary, and some members of a conservative Presbyterian church who regularly meet with the abortion clinic's staff to hold a "dialogue." What the article didn't mention were the local Catholic churches and agencies.

This omission is both appropriate and damning, Your Excellency. As you are surely aware, the rambling Victorian house next to the abortion clinic is the home of Catholic Social Services. Some good old boys in these mountains could spit tobacco juice from the roof of that house and hit the abortuary parking lot. Despite this close proximity to a battlefront in the abortion war, the CSS staff has never supported the pro-life counselors—other than to allow them, somewhat reluctantly, the use of CSS restrooms. In fact, when CSS first opened operations in that house, the director pointedly informed the local paper that the move next to the abortion clinic was coincidental and that CSS had no intention of interfering in any way with the abortuary's operations.

Once, I approached a friend, a parishioner at the Basilica of Saint Lawrence who has stood in prayer at the abortion clinic two or three mornings every week for 20 years. How many times, I asked her, had a Catholic priest appeared to pray at the clinic? My friend counted carefully to herself. "Six times," she concluded, "and Bishop Donohue came about fifteen years ago."

Seven appearances on the front lines in 20 years strikes me as pathetic, Your Excellency, especially from a Church so eager to proclaim Herself a friend to the unborn. My friend's comments reminded me of other local Catholic moments related to abortion: the monsignor who, when invited to pray on the sidewalk, replied, "Been there, done that"; the priest who makes it a point never to speak publicly about abortion and, on the Church's much-vaunted Pro-Life Sunday, never mentions any issues involving human conception and birth; the local Knights of Columbus—those guys who throw such a wickedly festive Mardi Gras party—who voted to discontinue support of the pro-life bus to Washington, D.C.

In the midst of these dreary musings, Your Excellency, life or fate or God presented me with a way to ease my concerns. The day after that issue of *Time* arrived, I received a form letter from your office requesting money for the Diocesan Support Appeal. As your bookkeepers know, I have given financial support to the DSA in the past. The amount of my gift was never great—I'm a former bookseller turned writer and teacher with the requisite cavalier disregard for pecuniary affairs—but, nevertheless, I have given some money each year.

This year, your letter proved an inspiration. Since those who offer aid and sidewalk counseling to expectant mothers drink humility the way I drink bourbon (they will take no credit for what they do), and since none of them receive any material payment whatsoever, and since the odds that the Church will recognize their efforts, at least on this earth, are about a million to one, I have decided to institute an award for these people. Rather than send my money to Charlotte's diocesan offices, I will spend it on a local person who has helped the cause of the unborn. Not only will this plan save your office the cost of processing my check, but it may even inspire others to practice charity personally rather than corporately.

I shall call my award the Asheville Life Advocates Medal. It will be of the schoolyard variety, cheaply inscribed; the award will also include the Sunday buffet for two at the renowned Grove Park Inn.

The friend I mentioned earlier will be the first recipient of this medal. Supported spiritually by her faithful husband, this woman has stood outside the abortion clinic on at least 1,500 occasions, has helped save at least 500 children from death by abortion, and has led the pro-life presence there for two decades.

One example may suffice to account for my friend's character. Several years ago, the Asheville police arrested her for using a megaphone outside the clinic. A jury found her guilty of violating the city's noise ordinance. When the judge sentenced her to a fine of $300 or 15 days in jail, she responded, "Your Honor, my conscience in this matter won't allow me to pay that fine."

The judge, an astute man who by now had wearied of the trial, took nearly another minute to size up his opponent. "You must have misunderstood me," he said at last. "I said you're free to go."

Guts, Your Excellency. Guts, a rosary, a spark in the eye, and the grace of God—these have helped save 500 Asheville babies from death, while Catholic Social Services and our Church go blithely about their business.

In its advertising for the DSA, our diocese urges us to give of our talent or treasure. I am pleased to offer the priests and staff of our diocese the same opportunity. If you'd like to contribute financially to the Asheville Life Advocates Award, if you'd like to send a letter of commendation, or if you'd like to appear in person to present the award, please let me know.

Here's wishing you a restful June. May God bless us both,

Joe Ecclesia

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by Scott P. Richert

When You're Alone, You're Alone

Three months ago, in the *American Proscenium* ("By Their Fruits," February), I posed a question: "Is a lone wolf any less a wolf because he is alone?"

My musings were prompted by the arrest, on December 8, of the Rockford *jihadi* Derrick Shareef (a.k.a. Talib Abu Salam Ibn), a black convert to the "religion of peace" who began his descent into "violent jihad" when he turned to mainstream Islam. Or, rather, they were prompted by the reaction of the local media and national commentators who went out of their way to assure us that, since there was no obvious "Al Qaeda connection," Shareef was a "lone wolf" who never posed much of a threat to the citizens of Rockford or the shoppers at CherryVale, the mall that Shareef had targeted for a grenade attack during Advent.

The absurdity of that statement ought to be obvious: Most murderers act alone, but they still manage to murder. More to the point, however: When we're talking about a "lone wolf" Muslim terrorist, is he ever really alone?

The same media outlets that never fail to see a connection between peaceful pro-life demonstrators and abortion-clinic bombers somehow fall as blind as Isaac when the would-be murderer is a Muslim. The very idea that the ideology of radical Islam might tie him to like-minded people is absurd; he must, by definition, have acted alone.

For Derrick Shareef, that may be true, insofar as his activities here in Rockford are concerned; but we now know that, over the past five-and-a-half years, his ideology brought him into contact with others who shared his desire for violent *jihad*.

On Wednesday, March 7, in Phoenix, Arizona, the FBI arrested Hassan Abujihaad, a former signalman second class in the U.S. Navy. Abujihaad (formerly Paul R. Hall) held an e-mail correspondence with jihadist websites in 2001, while stationed on the U.S.S. *Benfold* in the Persian Gulf. The correspondence, which ended just nine days before September 11, included praise for the suicide attack on the U.S.S. *Cole* in October 2000.

In April 2001, according to the federal warrant issued for his arrest, Abujihaad passed classified information to the operators of one of the websites, including:

> the makeup of a U.S. Navy battle group, each of its member ships (including a Navy destroyer, the U.S.S. *Benfold*), the specifications, assignments and missions of each ship, the battle group's planned movements, and a drawing of the group's formation when it was to pass through the Straits of Hormuz.

Abujihaad revealed the date (April 29) that the group would pass through the Straits of Hormuz, and he provided specific information about each ship, as well as a general assessment of the group's vulnerability to attack that bears a chilling resemblance to the assault on the U.S.S. *Cole*: "They have nothing to stop a small craft with RPG etc. except their Seals' stinger missiles."

After Abujihaad received an honorable discharge in January 2002, he moved to Phoenix and was hired on at a major United Parcel Service hub, where he was still working at the time of his arrest.

The case raises many questions, not the least of which is why the U.S. military would place a man who converted to Islam and took the name "Hassan, Father of *Jihad*" on a Navy destroyer in the Persian Gulf, even before September 11. More important for our purposes, however, is the role that Derrick Shareef played in the arrest of Abujihaad (who, like Shareef, is black, though you will search in vain for that information in mainstream news reports, even though it is given on the cover sheet of the arrest warrant).

During the investigation of Shareef, which started in September 2006,

> Investigators soon learned that Derrick Shareef had previously lived with Abujihaad in Phoenix, Arizona in 2004 . . . As the relationship between Shareef and the [confidential source] progressed, Shareef eventually made an introduction of the CS to Abujihaad, after which the CS communicated with Abujihaad directly via phone or over the internet.

Some civil libertarians have argued that the sequence of events in the Shareef arrest makes it appear that he was set up. The arrest warrant for Abujihaad, however, proves that the FBI viewed Shareef's arrest as an important step in catching a much bigger fish. It describes "post-arrest interviews" during which Shareef told investigators about Abujihaad's reaction to news reports concerning the arrest of one of the operators of the jihadist websites that Abujihaad had frequented:

> Abujihaad was reading an online news article, which Shareef believed to be from the Washington Post's website. Abujihaad read the article with Shareef looking over his shoulder. Abujihaad said, in substance, "I think this is about me" or "I think this article is talking about me." . . . According to Shareef, . . . Abujihaad became visibly upset and emotional and began to cry.

That Shareef's arrest was a necessary step in the capture of Abujihaad is confirmed by the sequence of events. By 11 A.M. CST on the day of Shareef's arrest, the CS called Abujihaad and revealed details from Shareef's "post-arrest interviews." In other words, the very first thing that the FBI interrogated Shareef about was his relationship with Abujihaad, and the very first thing they did with that information was use it to convince Abujihaad to incriminate himself on tape.

I ended the *American Proscenium* with another question: "How many lone wolves does it take to make a pack?" Anyone who knows anything about wolves, however, might suggest a better one: "How likely is it that a lone wolf is really alone?"

After all, even if you only see one, wolves almost always travel in packs. ◁

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Letter From Texas

by Wayne Allensworth

No Country for Honorable Men: The Prosecution of the "Border Patrol Two"

◆

The prosecution of, and harsh sentences meted out to, two Border Patrol agents involved in a shooting incident at the Texas-Mexico border tell us all we really need to know about the Bush administration's plans to erase U.S. borders once and for all.

On February 17, 2005, Border Patrol agent Ignacio Ramos responded to a request for backup from fellow agent Jose Compean. Compean had noticed a suspicious van driving along the levee road at the Rio Grande near Fabens, Texas (about 40 miles east of El Paso)—an area frequented by drug smugglers. Ramos drove toward Fabens, following a third agent already headed for the scene.

Their quarry was one Osvaldo Aldrete-Davila, who was transporting 700-800 pounds of marijuana into Texas. With the pursuers closing in, Aldrete-Davila jumped from the van and made a run for it—only to meet Compean, who had anticipated the drug smuggler's next move, at the levee. An altercation ensued. At one point, Aldrete-Davila raised his hands as if to surrender, but Compean slipped in the mud at the levee (perhaps while taking an unsuccessful swing at the suspect with the butt of a rifle or shotgun—a point prosecutors would make a lot of at the trial), and the suspect ran, heading back toward Mexico.

Ramos claimed that, as he approached, he saw Aldrete-Davila fleeing and Compean on the ground. Shots were fired. Compean fired 14 shots; Ramos fired one. The officers claimed that, as he ran, Aldrete-Davila turned a number of times to his left—he was left-handed—and back toward the two Border Patrol agents (a claim substantiated by the entry wound in Aldrete-Davila's buttocks, according to press accounts). Both lawmen later testified that they thought Aldrete-Davila had a weapon: He appeared to have something in his left hand. The two agents' assumptions—that Aldrete-Davila was likely a drug smuggler, that he was violating the U.S. border, and that he was dangerous—seem reasonable.

Aldrete-Davila continued running and made it to a waiting van, which vanished across the border. Meanwhile, calls for backup had brought seven other Border Patrol agents to the scene, including two supervisors. Compean picked up his shell casings; Ramos did not pick up the casing from his single shot. No report on the shooting was filed. Neither Ramos nor Compean thought Aldrete-Davila had been hit, and Ramos subsequently stated that the supervisors on the scene knew shots had been fired. He later said he thought that, under the circumstances, there was no need to file a formal report.

In light of the facts of the case, any violations of official procedure—not filing a shooting report, pursuing a suspect without first securing authorization from a supervisor—were largely technical. Something that common sense dictates cannot always be secured on the fly. As Ramos said, "What are we supposed to do? Do they want us to catch them or not?" Given subsequent events, that is indeed a good question.

Was deadly force necessary under the circumstances? It's difficult to say from the sketchy media accounts, but the supervisors on the scene did not raise any serious questions about the incident and understandably took the agents' word for it when they said they believed they had been threatened by the suspect. Ramos, once nominated as Border Patrol Agent of the Year, and Compean were apparently doing what they (and other agents) had been doing throughout their careers: walking a fine line on observing some very fuzzy—not to mention dubious—rules of engagement. At worst, the agents seem to have been deserving of administrative penalties.

Enter the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General; DHS investigator Christopher Sanchez; and U.S. attorney for the Western District of Texas, Johnny Sutton—a long-time ally of George W. Bush. Before being rewarded with his current post, Sutton had served as Governor Bush's criminal-justice policy director (1995-2000) and worked on the Bush-Cheney transition team. Two weeks after the incident, Sanchez received a phone call from a Border Patrol agent in Wilcox, Arizona. The investigator's mother-in-law was a friend of Aldrete-Davila's mother and had heard of the shooting incident. Aldrete-Davila's mother told her that he had been wounded during the incident near Fabens, though subsequent ballistics reports were inconclusive, not positively linking the bullet to Ramos' gun.

What followed is unclear—Sanchez reportedly called Aldrete-Davila and made inquiries about the incident. The DHS would subsequently claim that Ramos and Compean had knowingly shot an unarmed man who was trying to surrender—and that they had confessed to it. But a DHS report written by Sanchez and obtained by a California newspaper clearly indicates that the two agents had done nothing of the kind: They both had told investigators they thought the suspect had been armed. Nevertheless, Sutton's office filed charges against Ramos and Compean. At the trial, prosecutors painted a picture of Compean and Ramos as brutal, incompetent, and thuggish men who had knowingly set out to gun down an unarmed man, destroyed a "crime scene" (Compean policing his shell casings), and obstructed justice. The two men had supposedly sought to cover up an attempted murder—and violated the "civil rights" of an illegal-alien drug smuggler. Meanwhile, the El Paso sheriff's department stepped up patrols around Ramos's home. His family was being threatened by people they believed to be associates of Aldrete-Davila.

Sutton's office threw the book at Compean and Ramos, citing a statute meant to stiffen penalties for violent criminals using a weapon in the commission of a crime, which carries a mandatory ten-year sentence. Compean and Ramos were sentenced to 12- and 11-year prison terms, respectively. And the star witness at the trial was none other than Aldrete-Davila himself, offered immunity by Sutton to testify against Compean and Ramos. (Lately, Aldrete-Davila, who was treated at an Army medical center in El Paso, has been pursing a five-million-dollar lawsuit against the Border Patrol.)

Media reporting on the trial raised some important issues: The public outcry over the case against Ramos and Compean and the letters, e-mails, and faxes to the

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prosecutors and the judge may only have increased the determination of the court to put these men behind bars. Three jurors subsequently stated that they were pressured by other jury members to convict; two later signed sworn statements testifying that they had been told a hung jury was not an option. A motion to set aside the verdict in light of these revelations was denied. And the court deemed certain key information, which might have changed the outcome of the verdict, inadmissible. Such evidence included an indictment of Aldrete-Davila for drug smuggling in October 2005, months after the incident; Aldrete-Davila's refusal to name his fellow smugglers—a violation of his immunity agreement; reports indicating the increasing violence along the border, including attacks on Border Patrol agents (Compean and Ramos had good reason to fear for their lives); and the fact that both men had clean records as Border Patrol agents.

A group of congressmen, including Rep. Tom Tancredo (R-CO), and a number of Texas legislators have spearheaded efforts on behalf of the "Border Patrol Two," including demands that the DHS reports be made public. Rep. Ted Poe (R-TX), after being stonewalled for months, saw no other option but to invoke the Freedom of Information Act so he could review the evidence for himself. Grassroots organizations have called on President Bush to pardon Compean and Ramos, who began serving their sentences on January 17; the judge in the case had declared that the two men, who had served their country honorably for years, were a significant flight risk and could not be released pending appeal.

Since the sentencing of Ramos and Compean, Sutton's office has successfully prosecuted Texas Deputy Sheriff Guillermo F. Hernandez for firing at an escaping vehicle loaded with illegal aliens, wounding one of the passengers. The driver of the vehicle had reportedly tried to run Hernandez down. Some of those same illegal aliens later testified against Hernandez. Edwards County Sheriff Donald G. Letsinger defended Hernandez, saying that he had "followed the letter of the law" in the incident. The state patterned its case against Hernandez after the prosecution of Compean and Ramos: The officer had "violated the civil rights" of criminal aliens.

In February, Ignacio Ramos was beaten senseless (he suffered a concussion, broken ribs, and other injuries) by a gang of illegal-alien inmates in a Mississippi prison. The assailants, according to Ramos's uncle, yelled "*Maten a la Migra!*" ("Kill the immigration agent!") while beating him. Ramos has reportedly been confined in isolation for his own protection.

If you want to know what is important to this regime—and our rulers in general—just observe how Compean and Ramos have been judicially crucified, their careers ruined, their families impoverished, and their lives endangered by our "compassionate conservative" Decider-in-Chief. And make no mistake, it is the hand of the President that guides the mission to destroy them and discourage all who want to preserve our sovereignty and enforce our laws. Our late friend Sam Francis informed us that the managerial state engages in anarcho-tyranny—trumping up "crimes" to enforce its will (in this case, open borders), while ignoring real criminals. The Bush administration is sending a clear message to the Border Patrol, and to all other law-enforcement officers, that vigorous, aggressive protection of the U.S. borders will bring ruin, even prison. Sutton and his inquisitors chose to pursue a noncrime, grant immunity to a criminal alien, and destroy two men who had carried out their duty under extremely difficult circumstances. The hatred for everything patriotic and honorable evident in the determined pursuit of Compean and Ramos points to the rotten heart of our postnational elite. For many Border Patrol veterans, this will likely be the final straw. Like their colleagues in many urban police forces, they will give up, either resigning or simply avoiding potentially dangerous situations. As honorable Americans, the rest of us owe nothing to the party of treason that rules what remains of this country.

Corresponding editor Wayne Allensworth resides in Keller, Texas.

Letter From Vermont

by Kirkpatrick Sale

On Correctness and Collegiality

◆

It all began in February, when one disgruntled Vermonter started a blog to attack the Second Vermont Republic, the four-year-old secessionist organization in our state. He was apparently prompted by hearing Rob Williams, then cochair of the SVR, attacking Abraham Lincoln on the radio for the illegal suppression of Southern secession, and his political-correctness genes kicked in: *This sounds like the "neo-Confederate movement," and they're bad people.* He did a little research and discovered that the SVR had a weblink to the League of the South, which some professional liberal foundations like to call a "hate group," and besides, it had suspicious right-wingers on its advisory board. So up goes the blog, posted pseudonymously as from one Thomas Rowley (originally one of Ethan Allen's Green Mountain Boys), and out flow the accusations and innuendoes.

This was just the meat to feed one John Odum, a Democratic Party hack and campaigner for Sen. Bernie Sanders, apparently part of the Vermont political establishment that has taken a dim view of the SVR's successes, including a recent article in the mainstream *Burlington Free Press*. He promptly repeated the Rowley findings on his long-standing blog, which he claims has 400 readers per day, and sent them out to his list, along with "some of my own digging." A half-dozen of his regulars responded with shock and awe, some SVR people responded, and the brouhaha went on for more than a week—26 pages of it in tiny type on my printer. The SVR eventually responded on its website with denials and defenses, and Thomas Naylor, the other SVR cochair, issued a press release headed "Technofascist Smear Campaign," which defended the connection with the League of the South as being one of 36 secessionist groups it has links to—but "we are in bed with none of them."

At the end of it all, Odum announced he was dropping his blog; Williams announced he was retiring from the SVR to concentrate on its sister publication, *Vermont Commons*, and Rowley said he was going right along with his investigations and attacks. And a group calling itself part of the North Eastern Federation of Anarchist Communists (whatever that might mean) issued an ultimatum demanding that the SVR dismiss two advisors and cease all links with the "undemocratic, neo-fascist" League of the South on its website.

The crux of the charges against the SVR were the claims that had long been put out by the Alabama-based Southern Poverty Law Center, an outgrowth of the Civil Rights Movement that has made a

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specialty of finding racists and bigots that it can magnify into profound dangers so as to scare up money; it is, as a consequence, the richest civil-rights operation in the country, and it spends more money on fundraising than legal cases. Its charge is that the League of the South is a racist "hate group," and it points to quotes from three or four League members (out of maybe 3,500) that, though not overtly racist, emphasize white Southern culture and are certainly intemperate and inflammatory. It does not provide any evidence that, in 13 years, the League itself has ever had a racist platform or policy or purpose, or that the organization as a whole has said or done anything racist. (In fact, in 2005, the League of the South issued a specific statement of its nonracist policy, even envisioning "black and white Southerners sitting down together to determine their common destiny.")

The other charges that Rowley and Odum make have to do with four members of the SVR advisory board whom they don't like (all scholars at reputable universities): Marco Bassani, associated with the secessionist Italian Northern League, which includes people who have made strong anti-immigration statements, though Bassani has not; Thomas DiLorenzo, author of two books of Lincoln-revisionist history who is outspokenly antilabor and pro-capitalism; Donald Livingston, a philosopher of secession who left the League of the South six years ago ("not because it was racist, it isn't, but it was too political"); and Jason Sorens, who started the New State Project a few years ago to create a libertarian state in New Hampshire and is a political scientist who has studied secession.

The only crime these men seem to have committed is that they don't seem to be left-liberals of the kind that Rowley and Odum think Vermonters are, or should be, or should even be associating with. They are not accused of racism, only of holding "far-right views" that Vermonters are not supposed to like and, therefore, shouldn't be held by those on the SVR board. The SVR, it seems, should associate only with people that hold proper beliefs in "participatory democracy, social equality, and freedom," or whatever set of politically correct ideas are currently favored by the liberal/progressive left.

This is dangerous and ugly political assassination at work, and it is not only a childish breast-beating of my-politics-is-better-than-yours but a complete misunderstanding of the secessionist movement. That is why I decided to enter the fray with a statement from the Middlebury Institute about who are to be regarded as colleagues and allies and what it means to be part of a movement. The gist of it I take to be these three points: First, the secessionist movement is made up of organizations of many different kinds that are alike in their advocacy of secession—of secession in general, and of secession of their particular part of the planet. That is what makes them colleagues and allies—because, in this difficult task of making secession and separatism a legitimate political goal, they stand shoulder to shoulder with one another.

Second, it is not up to any organization in the movement (or its friends) to judge the attitudes, philosophies, or beliefs of others. While one would hope that all people share a commitment to certain basic rights and freedoms, it must be understood that different people in different places will have different ideas, desires, goals, and strategies—that, after all, is the whole point of secession. A group is for secession precisely because it does not want to be part of a larger entity whose beliefs and actions it does not like, and wishes to live free on its own terms.

Third, the kind of people who insist on telling others how to live and think, so as to have one unanimous right-minded uniformity, are dangerous people and precisely the kind that establish national governments and pass laws applicable to entire populations. Fascism is one obvious and ugly form of this, but mass industrial democracy is a similar, if often more benign, form. And it is exactly this that secession and separatism are opposed to.

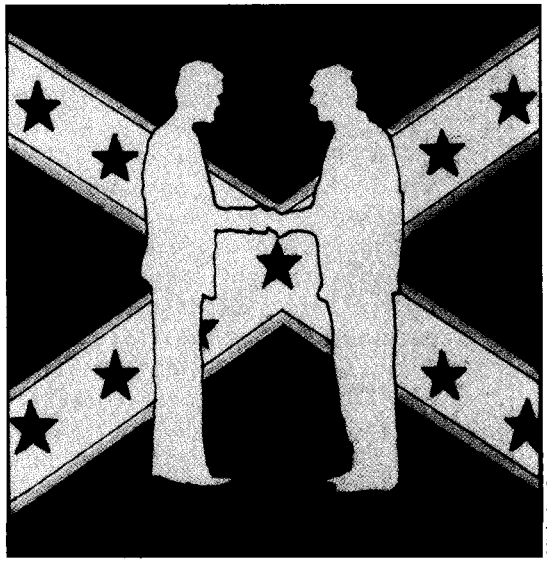
People turn to secession because they want their own form of government, on their own terms, and hope to create a state in which to live out their beliefs, principles, ideals. It is no more justifiable for one organization to question or criticize or castigate those goals if they work toward a Christian-directed government that outlaws abortion and adultery than if they work for a secular democracy favoring gun control and same-sex "marriages." The beauty of secession is that it looks toward having a world where those and many other kinds of states can exist, free and independent, while refusing to impose their ideas on others or have others' ideas imposed on them.

That said, it still might be desirable for the organizations involved in secession to come up with a basic statement of values and principles to which they all agree—much as in the Burlington Declaration that came out of the Secessionist Convention last fall. It could say something about freedom of association and movement, right to trial and due process, equality before the law, commitment to open and equal political participation, the right to secession of any coherent political entity, and the people's right to alter governments when they are despotic and destructive—something along those lines, serving as our common political and social platform.

Ultimately, we in the secessionist movement stand divided, but we stand together. We believe in secession, each of us, and, though the ends we work for may be different (and what a thriving, vibrant, multivariant world that would bring us to!), the means we use unite us all. And we are not to be diverted from our goals because of the old-fashioned political correctness of those who are a willing part of the empire and its corrupt political system.

Oh, incidentally, Rowley responded to my statement as you might expect his knee to jerk: "To Sale, the racist attitudes and agenda of some of his secessionist colleagues, and the potential consequences to his fellow citizens, is [*sic*] of no importance. Not every Vermonter will share this cavalier attitude." No, I expect it's too sophisticated for certain of them.

Kirkpatrick Sale is the director of the Middlebury Institute (Middlebury-Institute.org) *and the author, most recently, of* After Eden: The Evolution of Human Domination.



Nicholas Garrie

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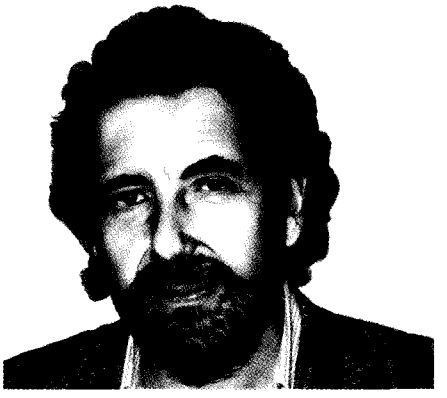
by Andrei Navrozov

Love and Fiction



I said I had fallen conditionally in love, and now anyone apart from myself would have paused to wonder what on earth, if anything, this awkward phrase could possibly mean. "Great! A penniless foreigner, a writer courting failure, a serial adulterer running off with an American teenager! *He* has a condition to make, would you believe it. He has got himself affianced to this delicate little flower, who also happens to be, potentially, one of those Saturday Night Movie heiresses that his *papagallo* kind of prince of taradiddle is always trying to snag, and he says? What is it? That he isn't ready to make a commitment? That he wants to paint the lily a little less white? I can bloody well see we'll be needing another round of drinks over here."

This would have been the male voice, while the female might try another tack, more Bloomsbury-wine-bar sympathetic than Jug-and-Bottle sarcastic. "Listen, honey, I do think you love her and everything, which is just great, but maybe the chemistry isn't right between the two of you. Like the spark, you know? [Pause.] Maybe there's no spark. And you can go on and try to reform her all you want, but what, you're Scorpio and she's Pisces, you're never going to change that. [Lights a Vogue with plastic cigarette lighter encased in gaily beaded involucre.] Anyway, don't you think it's a little bit unfair, on her I mean, that you've cooked up this diabolical plot she doesn't know a thing about, and anyhow, even if it works, from what you've told me I still don't really understand what it is you want from her. [Laughs.] It's sex, isn't it? It all comes down to sex, right? You'd like her to play games with you? Oh, I know, you want her to put on this little outfit and do a little dance for you, like wassername, the one who wanted the head brought to her on a silver platter, or that clip, you know the clip [undulates and sings, imitating music-video clip, eyes half-closed and mouth fully open on italicized vowel]: 'Don't cha wish your girlfriend was *hot* like me?' [Suddenly turning nasty, with a kind of lachrymose snarl.] Well, you can bloody well forget it, is what I'll say. [To the waitress.] Can I have another glass of the California white, please?"

To both these tirades, long oblivious by now of the experience of *ex post facto* revaluation that should have been formative for me, I would have replied that there was no accounting for tastes and that, if the girl wanted me, there must be a reason. Besides, there was virtually nothing in the books that made up the bulk of my baggage to prompt me to reply any differently.

"If you look for the working classes in fiction, and especially English fiction," wrote Orwell, "all you find is a hole." Well, disappointingly for anyone who might want to look to the recorded experience of others for illumination, the same could be said of the loving classes. It is a sobering truth that only with the victory of Soviet totalitarianism in Russia, and the ensuing publication of a social order that few writers could afford to ignore, did there appear in the world a body of literature wholly devoted to manual labor, a reality immanent from the earliest days of Creation. As is often the case with things written to order, much of this literature was outright hackwork; yet if one were not, as Orwell liked to put it, somebody with a safe 500 a year, and wanted to benefit from the experience of others in the same condition, one's only chance was to learn Russian.

The snag is that good writing is always a view from the inside—the prison, the school, the factory, the office, the casino, the brothel—and people on the inside rarely have time for writing. Hence, literature is the preserve of the uncommitted observer. Its dominant theme is autobiographical comfort. It is long on social dynamics and short on sentimental specifics. For nearly two centuries, from Richardson to Proust, society is what it has primarily portrayed. Apart from this, it is to the exceptions, rare as flecks of gold in a mass of uniformly gray rock, that one has had to look for any enrichment by recorded experience. Orwell, who described the abyss of destitution, is an exception because he had been down there. Dostoyevsky, who wrote *The Gambler*, is likewise an exception. He was a gambler. So was Casanova, who, after all, was a Casanova. But what did Tolstoy know besides being Tolstoy? What did he know of soldiering? Of adultery? No more, I dare say, than those innumerable Soviet hacks knew of joyful cement making or heroic bricklaying.

Thus the novel, or *roman*, the genre that was practically advertised from Goethe's Werther onward to have been invented to record the experiences of a lover, turns out to have been mislabeled, coming to focus as it did on the relationship of the individual to society and leaving the lover alone with his predicament, his pistol, and his private diary. All in all, it seems that it might require some general upheaval no less momentous than the Russian Revolution to compel writers to write specifically about love, or, at any rate, about something other than the society in which, quite comfortably or ever so slightly uncomfortably, they lived all their lives long, like Proust in his symptomatically cork-lined study, and which they succeeded in describing with great accuracy at virtually every stage of modern European history.

So the books in my baggage were of no help. There was nothing in them to indicate, one way or the other, whether there existed such a thing as conditional love. As for the other kind, there was little of that either, at least in the rational reaches of expository prose. Whereas poetry, like music, did not set out to answer questions at all, but rather to complicate and to confuse everything under the sun to the point of girlish tears, like some crazy Einstein of a math teacher whose two locomotives, meant to travel in opposite directions at different speeds in the problem set, embrace each other and jump into the sea to the strains of an Argentinian tango on the hotel terrace.

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by Srdja Trifkovic

A Mainstream Conservative

In a sane world, Dinesh D'Souza would not merit a single inch of this column. The greater Middle East, Islamic terrorism, Korea, the Balkans, the imperial mind-set, and many other problems and challenges America faces around the world would take precedence over the musings of a self-designated "conservative intellectual" with few original ideas and little ability to express them coherently.

We live in strange, postmodern times, however, in which Mr. D'Souza's views on Islam and terrorism are taken seriously by many decent, reasonably educated Americans. His views deserve our attention not because of any intrinsic value in them, but because his status as a mainstream conservative is illustrative of the state of the "movement," and the prominence given to his claims is detrimental to America's ability to wage the "War on Terror" successfully.

In his latest *New York Times* best-seller, *The Enemy At Home*, D'Souza asserts that conservative religious believers in America should join forces with conservative religious believers in the Islamic world to combat their common enemy: the cultural left. In order to build alliances with traditional Muslims, he asserts, the right must take three critical steps:

> First, stop attacking Islam. Conservatives have to cease blaming Islam for the behavior of the radical Muslims. Recently the right has produced a spate of Islamophobic tracts with titles like *Islam Unveiled*, *Sword of the Prophet*, and *The Myth of Islamic Tolerance*. There is probably no better way to repel traditional Muslims, and push them into the radical camp, than to attack their religion and their prophet.

Two of the titles D'Souza finds so offensive that condemning them tops his list of "critical steps" are by Robert Spencer, and *Sword of the Prophet* is mine. D'Souza wants us, and presumably other similarly minded authors (Bat Ye'or, Ibn Warraq, Walid Shoebat, *et al.*), to shut up.

It is noteworthy that D'Souza is condemning our writings as "Islamophobic" without further elaboration. Like the term *Islamophobia* itself—a classic product of the Hate Crime Industry—his technique is characteristic of the totalitarian left. I remember reading, as a teenager in Tito's Yugoslavia, similarly worded condemnations of dissident writers and their "tracts" in the communist-controlled press. Once they were defined as "antisocialist," "reactionary," or "nationalist," no further elaboration was needed, and no debate allowed.

Furthermore, D'Souza uses *Islamophobia* with the implicit assumption that his readers are familiar with the term's meaning. Nevertheless, for the uninitiated, it is necessary to spell out its formal, legally tested definition, provided by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), a lavishly funded organ of the European Union. Based in Vienna, this body diligently tracks the instances of "Islamophobia" all over the Old Continent and summarizes them in its reports. The EUMC's definition of the hate crime of Islamophobia includes eight salient features: Islam is seen as a monolithic bloc, static and unresponsive to change; Islam is seen as separate and "other"; Islam is seen as inferior to the West, barbaric, irrational, primitive, and sexist; Islam is seen as violent, supportive of terrorism, and engaged in a clash of civilizations; Islam is seen as a political ideology; criticisms made of the West by Islam are rejected out of hand; hostility toward Islam is used to justify the exclusion of Muslims from mainstream society; anti-Muslim hostility is seen as natural or normal.

This definition is obviously intended to preclude any possibility of meaningful discussion of Islam: Islamophobia amounts to Islamo-denial. In reality, all eight proscribed views of Islam are, to some extent, true.

That Islam is fundamentally static and unresponsive to change is evident from the absence of an orthodox school of thought capable of reflecting critically on *jihad*, *sharia*, *jizya*, *etc.*, and developing the new Islamic interpretations that so many Westerners keep hoping for. Previous attempts to reformulate Islamic doctrine have failed, because they opposed centuries of orthodoxy. It is not the jihadists who are "distorting" Islam; the would-be reformers are.

That Islam is separate from our (Western, Christian, European) culture and civilization, and that it is "other" (than our culture and civilization) are facts that will not change even if the West eventually succumbs to the ongoing jihadist demographic onslaught. As for hatred of "the other," no religion mandates it so implacably and unambiguously as Islam does.

Whether Islam is inferior to the West is a matter of opinion. That it cannot create a prosperous, harmonious, stable, creative, and attractive polity is not. Whether Islam is barbaric, irrational, primitive, and sexist is at least debatable; but that its fruits are such is beyond reasonable doubt. Islam is seen as violent, aggressive, supportive of terrorism, and engaged in a clash of civilizations, not because of an irrational "phobia" in the feverish mind of the beholder, but because of the clear mandate of its scripture, because of the record of almost 14 centuries of historical practice, and, above all, because of the example of its founder.

Islam should be seen as a political ideology because its defining characteristic is a highly developed mandatory program to improve man and create a new society; to impose complete control over that society; and to train cadres ready, even eager, to use violence in its pursuit. The doctrine of *jihad* makes Islam closer to Bolshevism or National Socialism than to any religion known to man. D'Souza's alleged distinction between Islamic "extremists" and "moderates" is a Western construct. They may have differences over methods, but not over the final objective: to turn every last square inch of *Dar al-Harb* into *Dar al-Islam*. Hence, Islam's chief "criticism of the West"—and of every other non-Is-

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lamic culture, civilization, or tradition—is that it is infidel and, therefore, undeserving of existence.

A reasoned hostility toward Islam should not be used to justify discriminatory practices toward Muslims. On the contrary, a comprehensive education campaign about the teaching and practice of Islam should result in legislative action that would exclude Islam from the societies it is targeting—not because it is an offensive religion, but because it is an inherently seditious, totalitarian ideology incompatible with the fundamental values of the West and of all other civilized societies, including India, China, and Japan. The "infidels'" determination to defend their lands, families, cultures, and faith against Islamic aggression is both natural and normal and must not be neutralized by the Eurocrats from the left or by D'Souza and his likes from the "right."

It is entirely possible that Dinesh D'Souza subscribes to some other definition of *Islamophobia* than the one provided above. In order to find out, I accepted the invitation to debate him on WDAY's *Hot Talk With Scott Hennen*. After the first five minutes of the program, I concluded that his knowledge of Islam is pretty tenuous—despite his claim that he spent four years studying it—as this transcript indicates:

> Trifkovic: Have you ever actually read the Koran?
>
> D'Souza: Of course I have.
>
> Trifkovic: Do you know—how are the Suras arranged?
>
> D'Souza: They are . . . er . . . they are not arranged in any chronological order . . . er . . . [pause] and . . . er . . . [pause] and so I quote in my book both the violent and . . .
>
> Trifkovic: Just tell me how are they arranged.
>
> D'Souza: The other point . . .
>
> Trifkovic: Can you just tell me how are the Suras arranged?
>
> D'Souza: . . . right. You can't just call . . .
>
> Trifkovic: Why don't you just tell me, how are the Suras arranged?
>
> Hennen: OK, one at a time here; your question for Dinesh, Serge, is?
>
> Trifkovic: In what order are the Suras arranged in the Koran?
>
> D'Souza: [long silence] . . . I really don't know what you mean by that. When you say "in what order" then . . . er . . . [pause] there . . .
>
> Trifkovic: They happen to be arranged by size, from short to long!
>
> D'Souza: [without interruption] And when did Iran . . .

By continuing blithely with his "points," instead of correcting my assertion (which was deliberately incorrect), Dinesh D'Souza took the bait, confirming that he has not studied the Koran, and that he may never have even held one in his hands.

As it happens, the eccentric arrangement of the Muslim holy book—from those endlessly long and often boring Medinan Suras (Al-Baqarah, with almost 300 verses, or Al-'Imran, with 200) to the shorter and more interesting Meccan ones—is the Koran's most salient feature and is bound to be noticed and remembered by any modestly observant and not necessarily astute layman. That this fact is unknown to an author who claims to have spent four years studying it is indicative either of his tenuous hold on reality or of his excessively creative imagination. The whole episode would be farcical, were it not for the seriousness of the subject.

D'Souza's particular statement in our debate that prompted my impromptu test is worth quoting at some length:

> These attacks on Islam—the Koran is a gospel of violence, Muhammad is the inventor of terrorism—they are not just tactically foolish, they are historically wrong, because Islam has been around for 1,300 years; Islam radicalism was invented in the 1920's and came to power in 1979. How can we blame the Prophet Muhammad for things that Khomeini and Bin Laden are saying, that are very new? Historian Bernard Lewis points out that radical Islam is a radical break with traditional Islam. Never before have Muslim *mullahs*, or clergymen, ever ruled a Muslim country. All Muslim countries have been ruled by nonclergymen until Khomeini. So I think the flaw we see in this work and in the Islamophobic literature is that it tries to link the early centuries of Islam.

The notion that analyzing and exposing those aspects of orthodox Islamic teaching that prompt bloodshed will drive "traditional" Muslims into the radical camp is the equivalent of the claim, advanced during the Cold War by Moscow's apologists and fellow travelers, that Western "anti-Sovietism" is detrimental to the "moderates" in the Kremlin and plays right into the hands of the "hard-liners." Aside from its logical flaws, D'Souza's argument is also hypocritical: His latest book does not allow for the possibility of a cleverly driven conservative wedge between the "traditional" left and its self-hating mutant offspring.

D'Souza's claim that "all Muslim countries have been ruled by nonclergymen until Khomeini" is simply untrue, as it implies some form of separation of mosque and state that is explicitly rejected by Islam. "How can we blame the Prophet Muhammad for things that Khomeini and Bin Laden are saying?" asks D'Souza, casually adopting a pious Muslim's designation of Islam's founder. And, actually, the answer can be found in the Koran and in the *Hadith*. Islam stands or falls with the person of Muhammad, a deeply flawed and violent man. The problem of Islam, and the problem of the rest of the world with it, is its claim that the words and acts of its prophet provide the universally valid standard of morality for all time. D'Souza is free to deny this; but the seriousness of the issue makes it obligatory for the rest of us to question his conclusions and his credentials.

In the "War on Terror," the greatest challenge is with ourselves, with those among us who have the power to influence policy and shape opinions, and who are ignorant and deluded. Having absorbed postmodern assumptions, certain only of uncertainty, devoid of any serious faith except a belief in their own uniqueness, members of our elite class treat the jihadist mind-set as a pathology that can and should be addressed by treating causes external to Islam itself. The cure suggested by the left—more inclusiveness, less profiling, more diversity—differs only in form from the alliance of Western conservatives and traditional Muslims proposed by D'Souza. Both are as likely to make us safe from terrorism as the leaders of the "conservative movement" are likely to become conservative.

One of the reasons that movement is politically irrelevant—as the late Sam Francis put it, it "doesn't move"—is that it accepts people such as Dinesh D'Souza as *bona fide* members. A good *chistka* is needed, and exposing these charlatans is one way to start. ·C

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IMMIGRATION

Enter Stage Right

by William Lutz

In the past, Republican primaries in Texas were won and lost on a wide variety of issues—taxes, ties to the community, money, education, abortion, agriculture. Usually, candidates who can unite a handful of major GOP donors (most of whom own large businesses in the state) have a major advantage in the primaries. Then, in 2006, the establishment started to lose control. First, several incumbent state legislators lost—a rare occurrence in Texas GOP primaries. This happened, in part, because of the legislature's failure to pass a school-finance and property-tax-relief package; by the time it had passed, in May 2006, it was two months after the primary.

There was another development, however—one with far greater long-term consequences. Immigration became the most significant issue in Texas Republican politics, threatening to break up the historic coalition of blue-collar, socially conservative Reagan Democrats and pro-business Republicans.

For over a decade, the state's GOP leadership worked overtime to prevent immigration from becoming a campaign issue. Republicans who campaigned on cutting illegal immigration suddenly found that major donors did not want to meet with them. Former Gov. George W. Bush stated clearly that he opposed "English only" laws and that he preferred "English plus" (whatever that means). In fact, as governor, Bush made favorable comments about bilingual education, and, when Ward Connerly came to Austin, Governor Bush refused to meet with him.

Today, the citizens of Texas are clearly stating their opposition to illegal immigration. Poll after poll has shown that stopping the flow of illegals over their border is the most important issue to Republican primary voters. Perhaps this stems from the emergence of the Minutemen along the border. Or perhaps the highly publicized Mexican criminal-gang activity has played a role. What is certain is that Texas taxpayers are sick and tired of having to subsidize services for foreigners who have broken the law. And they are concerned that English is becoming less and less common in some neighborhoods in the state's major cities.

The Lone Star Foundation (my employer) recently conducted a study on the costs of illegal immigration. We found that Texans are subsidizing this Hispanic invasion to the tune of over four billion dollars per year. The bulk of these costs occur in public education—a legacy of *Plyler* v. *Doe* (1982), in which the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a Texas law that banned illegal immigrants from our public schools.

In addition to the cost of schooling illegal aliens, Texas taxpayers pay to incarcerate illegal immigrants who commit crimes. In 2001, the state legislature granted in-state tuition rates at state universities to illegal immigrants who graduate from Texas high schools.

Federal law requires hospital emergency rooms to treat patients without regard to ability to pay. So when illegal immigrants working in low-wage jobs without benefits get sick, that is where they go. In Texas, healthcare for indigents is largely provided through a system of County Hospital Districts, which are funded by local property taxes. Thanks, in part, to illegal immigrants, in Harris County (Houston), both property-tax rates and appraisals have skyrocketed, fueling a massive voter backlash. At the same time, Houston-area hospitals are facing serious public-health problems: Trauma centers often go on "diversion" status, meaning people with serious injuries have to be flown elsewhere to get treatment.

It is no surprise, then, that a large portion of the drive-time radio talk show of Dan Patrick (KSEV-Houston's general manager) is devoted to two topics: putting a cap on property-tax appraisals and stopping illegal immigration.

Last year, Patrick ran for an open seat in the Texas State Senate on a platform devoted to those two issues. (Texas has 32 representatives in the U.S. Congress and only 31 state-senate seats, so races for the Texas State Senate are expensive and get noticed.) Patrick ran against two sitting state House committee chairmen and a Houston city-councilman. One of those chairmen, Joe Nixon, had successfully passed Texas's sweeping tort-reform bill. Together, Patrick's opponents spent more than a million dollars, outspending him by more than a 2-to-1 margin. All of the major business and trade associations endorsed Patrick's opponents. Still, in March 2006, Patrick took 69 percent of the vote in a four-way primary—enough to avoid a runoff. The second-place finisher polled 18 percent.

In the past, candidates who had a message but lacked the support of business had no means by which to get that message out. Successful campaigns were about raising enough money to make use of direct mail. For Patrick, KSEV ("The Voice") provided an alternative forum. Indeed, the radio station has changed the dynamics of Harris County Republican politics. Even in state House races (in which Patrick wasn't a contestant), the candidates had no choice but to talk about tax caps and immigration. The same went for Patrick's opponents. Beyond Houston, in the Dallas suburb of Farmers Branch, the city council recently passed an ordinance prohibiting the rental of property to illegal immigrants and making English the official language of the city.

Now, the Republican Party of Texas platform plank on immigration begins "No amnesty! No how. No way."

In the state legislature, many lawmakers have filed immigration-related bills. Patrick has filed one that would impose a tax on small-money transfers out of the country (*e.g.*, to Mexico) to help defray the cost of services used by immigrants.

Some proposed bills direct the state to calculate the cost of illegal immigration. Others would end in-state tuition for illegals. Still others would prohibit "sanctuary cities," where city councils (including Houston's) instruct law-enforcement officers not to ask about immigration status when writing traffic citations. Another bill would cut off services to citizen children of illegal immigrants—an effort to get the U.S. Supreme Court to reconsider the pro-illegal-immigrant decisions it handed down in the 1960's and 70's.

Just because these bills have been filed doesn't mean they will pass, however. The business community—particularly those businesses that profit from a plentiful supply of cheap illegal-immigrant labor—are fighting back. The Texas Association of Business has founded a front group called Texas Employers for Immigration Reform, which is pushing for a

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Nicholas Garrie

guest-worker program at the federal level and little or no action at the state level. In addition, civil-rights groups are suing Farmer's Branch and have threatened to do the same to any unit of government that adopts a tough stance on enforcing law that pertain to illegals.

Late last year, a group of major Texas campaign contributors wrote an opinion piece in the *Dallas Morning News* that called for a guest-worker program. The list of signatories includes Bob Perry—a home builder who helped to bankroll the "Swift Boat Veterans for the Truth" ads during the 2004 elections—and Bo Pilgrim, owner of Pilgrim's Pride Chicken.

What action the legislature will take remains to be seen. One thing already has changed in the Lone Star State, however: Two years ago, no politician dared talk about illegal immigration; now, all of them do.

William Lutz is the managing editor of the Lone Star Report.

CRIME

Race, Crime, and the Media

by R. Cort Kirkwood

If five whites carjacked a black couple, tortured them for hours, then dumped the bodies, the national news media would descend upon the benighted city in which the dastardly crime occurred and, having reported the unspeakable deeds, subject the rest of us to rants on racism and harangues on hate. It happened with James Byrd, the black man dragged to death behind a car in Jasper, Texas, and it happens even when the crimes are fictive, as with huckstress Tawana Brawley and, more recently, the lacrosse team at Duke University. In such cases, we are told that whether or not the crimes actually occurred does not matter: We learn a lesson simply in contemplating them.

The truth is, we are never permitted to contemplate the truth about race and crime. Most interracial crime involves blacks harming whites, and federal statistics show that blacks commit more hate crimes than whites. The news media's stiff-necked refusal to report these facts is escalating and indisputable, as several recent cases show, and invites us to question why so many news professionals—so dedicated to disclosing so many unwelcome facts about so many subjects—are so unwilling to examine this one. "Liberal media bias" isn't the only answer. Something else is at work.

First, a few examples. The murders of Christopher Newsom and Channon Christian in Knoxville, Tennessee, merited almost no attention from the national news media and none from the *New York Times*. According to police, on January 7, a band of black criminals carjacked the pair, then treated them to a nightmare of sexual torture. The gang raped Newsom, shot him, burned him with gasoline, wrapped him in bedding, then set him ablaze. Afterward, they dumped his body on nearby railroad tracks. They forced Christian to watch this and repeatedly (and savagely) raped her, then sprayed liquid cleaner in her mouth to erase their residual DNA. After killing her, the thugs placed her in trash bags and stuffed her in a garbage can. Five suspects await trial.

On Halloween, three white girls approached a haunted maze in the backyard of a home in Long Beach, California. A group of a dozen black boys, according to newspaper accounts, began taunting them. The boys grabbed their crotches, asking, "Are you down with it?" The girls went through the maze, but when they returned to the front yard, the boys were waiting to taunt them again. Then they heard another male voice declare, "I hate white people." "White bitches," others shouted. The girls started to leave, but a mob of about 30 blacks, including young girls, gathered and pelted them with pumpkins and lemons. "We hate white people," they hollered, "f--king white people." When the defenseless girls tried to flee, the mob attacked in full force, beating and stomping the first victim to the ground. When she tried to fight back, a black man smashed her head with a skateboard, then hit her again when she was on the ground, unconscious. The mob kicked her anyway. When one friend tried to rescue her, the mob swarmed, punched her until she dropped, then stomped, and kicked her on the ground. She received 12 facial fractures and severe damage to one of her eyes. The third girl also tried to help, but the mob beat her to a pulp—again, kicking and stomping her when they got her on the ground.

The judge tossed out DNA evidence from a victim's blood on one attacker's clothes because, one news report said, it would complicate the case. Ultimately, he sentenced those found guilty to house arrest and probation. Again, the *New York Times* and other national news media mostly ignored it. No wondering how it could happen. No soul-searching. No lectures on racism from the university professoriate, Jesse Jackson, or Al Sharpton.

In April 2005, a mob of 30 blacks attacked four white girls at Marine Park in Brooklyn, New York, shouting "black power," according to the small weekly that covered it, and invoking Martin Luther King, Jr. Two of the victims landed in the hospital, one with a broken nose. Immediately, police denied this was a hate crime. The national news media ignored it. And again, the Rainbow Coalition took a powder.

On December 14, 2000, two black brothers, Jonathan and Reginald Carr, invaded the Wichita home of Jason Befort and his two friends, Bradley Heyka and Aaron Sandler, who were entertaining Befort's girlfriend, Heather Muller, and Sandler's former girlfriend ("H.G."). (Sandler was then studying for the priesthood.) As with the carjacking in Knoxville, the black men, ending a week-long feral rampage, subjected their five white victims to an orgy of sexual torture nearly beyond description. After beating the men senseless, they forced the women to have sex, attempted to force the men to have sex with the women, then raped and sodomized the women. They robbed them and drove the naked (the women were clad only in sweaters) victims to a field and executed four of them. H.G., having been shot in the head and run over repeatedly with a truck, managed to survive. Despite H.G.'s testimony, which indicated that the

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brothers made numerous racial slurs while torturing and attempting to kill her, prosecutors hotly denied that this was a hate crime. Again, the national news media ignored the story.

Stories about all these crimes appeared in local newspapers and on local television news. (Even local media often omit the race of the suspect.) Somehow, these stories never rocketed to the editorial stratosphere of CBS, CNN, the *Washington Post*, or the *New York Times*. Some national-news websites published a smattering of AP stories about these crimes. Had they involved whites attacking blacks, all of these news organizations would have dispatched staff writers, photographers, producers, and cameramen to get the story.

That is exactly what happened when three white lacrosse players at Duke University were accused of raping a black stripper at an off-campus party; the national news media descended in full force. The charges smeared the team, and the Duke lacrosse season was canceled. Hundreds of stories appeared about this fictive crime—a case in which the prosecutor was forced to quit and may be disbarred for egregious ethical violations. The *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the major television networks unlimbered a blunderbuss and sprayed us with stories. It was time to search our souls for racism. For intolerance. For bigotry. For a crime that never happened. Of course, Durham was recently the site of a rape at an off-campus party at which men from Duke were present. The national news media ignored it, and the *Raleigh News and Observer* eliminated race in its description of both the party and the suspect. A black fraternity hosted the party. The suspect is black; the victim is white.

The leftists who run the national news media know what they are doing, and they won't confront the truth about race and crime; that would require reforming their thoughts about the world and undermine their declared agenda. The news media are obsessed with "diversity," as Bill McGowen demonstrated in *Coloring the News*, his book on how the media spins stories because of race. Some topics, including affirmative action, are taboo in newsrooms. For example, when the *New York Times* exposed rank incompetence and rampant criminality among rookies in the NYPD, it failed to disclose how or why such incompetence and criminality crept into the ranks: Hiring standards had been lowered to promote minorities in the name of "diversity."

In journalism, the last few years have been one long chin-wag about diversity. The potentates of journalism discuss it with religious fervor. Editors receive dogmatic flyers and evangelical videotapes importuning them to hire minority applicants and interns and to attend minority job fairs. They receive surveys designed to measure the racial and sex complexion of newsrooms. The American Society of Newspaper Editors proclaims, "We count the number of journalists, their gender [*sic*] and race" in order to "help newsrooms think about diversity." The society sponsors a silly project called "Time Out for Accuracy and Diversity." Of course, accuracy never trumps diversity. The publisher of the *New York Times* has said that diversity is the most important issue facing his newspaper; this is how Jayson Blair, a serial liar with a long rap sheet of plagiarism and mendacity, slipped through the cracks.

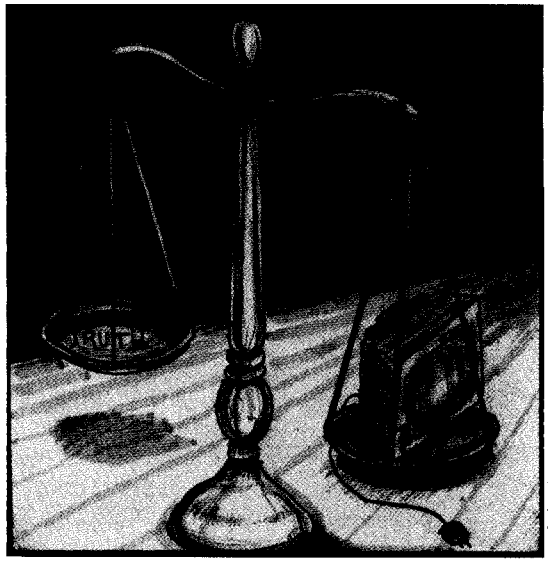
This leftist obsession with diversity and race in the newsroom informs the media's coverage of crime, particularly interracial crime. In a letter posted on the forum at *Romenesko*, on the website of the Poynter Institute, David Mills, a former writer for the *Washington Times*, hammered the *Los Angeles Times* for ignoring the mob melee at Long Beach. "You don't have to be a card-carrying Klansman," Mills wrote,

> to point out that the LA Times surely would be treating this story differently if three black women had been attacked by 30 white teenagers hurling words like "F--- black people." Columnists and editorial writers would be rending their garments, agonizing over the meaning of such a brutal crime. . . .
>
> The Halloween mob assault appears to be the worst instance of black-on-white violence in Southern California since Reginald Denny took a cinder block to the head. Why is the LA Times covering it so grudgingly? The only reference to the beatings on the op-ed page came last Sunday, when Michael McGough, a senior editorial writer, wrote of this case: "I wouldn't dare to prejudge [it] even if the facts weren't so murky." He then fretted that an "unintended consequence" of hate-crime laws is that "such laws could end up punishing blacks who commit violence against whites—which is a far cry from the historical experience that inspired hate-crime statutes."
>
> Say what? I didn't realize that hate-crime laws were supposed to punish only white people. Presented with a shocking instance of black-on-white violence, the Times thinks the only larger issue worth discussing is whether hate-crime legislation is wrongheaded?

McGough's point was that blacks are incapable of racism and hate crimes; they are perpetual victims. No wonder the national news media refuses to report horrific black-on-white crimes. Just as "diversity" trumps competence in the newsroom, white-on-black crime always trumps its converse.

The media's morality play about unbridled white racism is a perilous fairy tale that justifies the media's racial agenda not just for newsrooms but for society at large. Moreover, whites are increasingly angry about the media's treatment of blacks and crime, which undermines what little credibility the media have and energizes unfair and unjust remarks and rage about blacks in general. This, in turn, breeds the very racial animosity the dim bulbs in the news media claim they want to erase. Yet admitting the truth would undermine the media's hectoring, obnoxious propaganda, which insists that whites are oppressors and blacks are victims, and would deprive the race hustlers and cultural leftists of the crowning symbol that permits them to rig the courts and spin the news: the racist white bogeyman.

R. Cort Kirkwood is the author of Real Men: Ten Courageous Americans to Know and Admire *(Cumberland House).*



Nicholas Carrie

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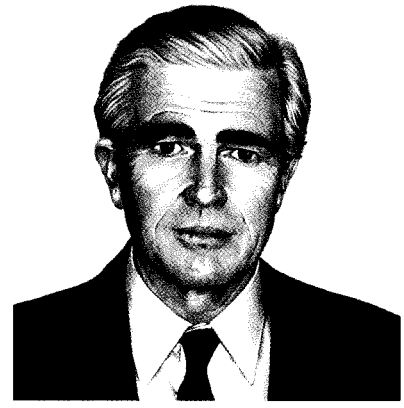
by George McCartney

The Personal Is Not the Political



The Lives of Others

Produced by Bayerischer Rundfunk and Creado Film
Directed and written by Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck
Distributed by Sony Pictures Classics

Breach

Produced and distributed by Universal Pictures
Directed by Billy Ray
Screenplay by Adam Mazer and William Rotko

Anyone who wants to know what it is like to live in a police state should hasten to see *The Lives of Others*, the winner of this year's Oscar for best foreign film, an unexpected recognition from the Academy's usually purblind judges. This compellingly cold-eyed German film made by first-time director-writer Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck tells the story of an implacable agent in the infamous Stasi (the East German secret police) assigned to monitor a young thespian couple suspected of straying from the Marxist script. Becoming their unseen audience of one, he unexpectedly witnesses a personal drama that threatens his political convictions.

By 1984, the German Democratic Republic had brought George Orwell's vision of the totalitarian state to still life. Figures vary, but most commentators agree that the Stasi employed 100,000 souls and commanded another 200,000 wretches as freelance informers, willing or not. This meant that there was a snoop for every 50 citizens in this workers' paradise, each pledged to protect the people from being contaminated by Western shenanigans. Books, plays, art, and films were monitored, lest they spread anticommunist infections. Thought itself was suspect. In the course of one grueling interrogation, an agent warns his suspect against supposing Stasi methods inhumane. To entertain such a thought would be a crime against the state that could put him in prison indefinitely.

The genius of Donnersmarck's film is that it tells its story through the eyes of the Stasi operative. We first meet him—Captain Wiesler (Ulrich Mühe)—as he is conducting a class in interrogation tactics, using a videotape of one of his, shall we say, subjects. On the tape, a young man repeatedly denies knowing anything about his neighbor's attempt to flee to the West. Then, Wiesler stops the recording to observe dryly that, with each new round of questioning, the suspect tells his story with exactly the same words, a sure sign he has rehearsed his answers and is, therefore, guilty. The only rehearsals permitted in Wiesler's world are those directed by the collective spirit of Marxism. Individual performances are verboten. His button eyes stare out from his frozen face, beholding a world he knows to be insufficiently orthodox. As a true believer, he is sleepless in his commitment to detect and denounce deviance from the party line. For all his ideological zealotry, however, his clothing suggests he harbors a vestigial individuality. He wears a colorless nylon windbreaker over a drab, gray suit. Since the windbreaker only reaches his waist, the suit jacket's tails flutter beneath it as he strides purposefully to his assignments. From under his accepted straightjacket, his crimped humanity waves furtively, if a little ridiculously, at a chilled world. His next assignment begins to defrost this world.

The minister of culture orders Wiesler to spy on George Dreyman, a playwright thought to have strayed from the socialist path. Although his plays are outwardly as Marxist as Brecht's, they seem a little too open to Western ideas. Setting himself up in an attic space over Dreyman's spacious but cluttered apartment, Wiesler listens in on him and his girlfriend, Christa-Maria (Martina Gedeck). He's disconcerted to discover that, despite Dreyman's evident *joi de vivre*, he toes the Marxist line. Without surrendering his mind, Dreyman has managed to adapt to his political circumstances. Although many of his artist friends are embittered by the state's interference with their work and their lives, Dreyman, by dint of his sunny, creative personality, accepts the scrutiny as a necessary phase in building what he trusts will become a healthy society. Then, his friend and former director commits suicide, shattering his comfortable accommodation with the thuggish state. The director had willfully burst the seams of his straightjacket, prompting the minister of culture to shut him out of the state-run theater. In his grief, Dreyman decides to take a stand, if only clandestinely. Doing some research, he discovers that the GDR ceased publishing reports of suicides as their number continued to rise sharply through the 70's and into the 80's—an odd oversight by a government ordinarily obsessed with demographics. But then the GDR wasn't about to broadcast how many people preferred to absent themselves from communist felicity. This is Dreyman's opportunity to avenge his friend's death and make some amends for what he now sees as his timidity. He writes an essay inquiring into the GDR's surprising silence on suicides and arranges to have it published anonymously by *Der Spiegel* in West Berlin. This, of course, is a breach of communist etiquette almost as egregious as Winston Smith's decision to keep a diary in *1984*.

Although Wiesler divines Dreyman's intentions, he doesn't rush to report him. He has taken a wholly uncharacteristic personal interest in Dreyman and Christa-Maria after learning the real reason he's been asked to put them under surveillance. The minister of culture doesn't care about Dreyman's ideas; he is after Christa-Maria's body and wants to remove his competitor for her affections by putting him in prison. Meanwhile, he has already intimidated the unstable Christa-Maria into yielding to his desires with a blend of threat and inducement. Not troubling himself with subtlety, he bluntly informs her that he can either advance or halt her career according to how she responds to him. Wiesler the zealot is so disgusted by this discovery that he toys

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with subverting his investigation.

Until this point, the film is a quietly devastating examination of how authorities so easily abuse their power under the cover of ideological necessity. (Sound familiar?) Then, the narrative becomes a somewhat formulaic cat-and-mouse game replete with slightly shopworn audience manipulation. But it's all carried off with such Hitchcockian brio that you're never prompted to question the film's authenticity while watching it. In one improbable but dramatically necessary scene, Wiesler accidentally runs into Christa-Maria in a shabby café. They're both there to numb themselves to the emotional impact of the same squalid prospect. The boorish minister has called Christa-Maria to a rendezvous, and Wiesler, who has fallen in love with the couple at an investigatory distance, knows it. Discarding the code of his profession, he approaches her as a theater fan. He commends her for being so authentic on stage. Having been forced into deceiving Dreyman, she demurs. "Actors are never who they are," she acidly observes.

Wiesler is well ahead of her and begs to differ. "I am your audience," he tells her, implicitly claiming truer insight into her character. It's an uncanny moment, and Mühe's subtle acting gives Wiesler's heretofore unexpressive face all the poignancy of his authentic concern. He is clearly trying to nudge her toward the confidence she needs to be herself and shun her tormentor.

Wiesler's decision to risk coming out from behind his official veil will prove fateful for the couple and for himself. In the event, we realize Donnersmarck's purpose. He has exploded once and for all an ugly, soul-destroying cliché: The personal need never be the political.

In *Breach*, Chris Cooper plays Robert Hanssen, the turncoat who spied for the Russians for the last 22 years of his tenure at the FBI. He does so with a subtlety comparable to Mühe's, but his superlative acting serves a questionable narrative. Director Billy Ray and his writers, Adam Mazer and William Rotko, seem to have shaped their supposedly true-life story to serve a tendentious agenda.

As Winston Churchill said of Russia, Hanssen is "a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma." How could this Catholic family man, a daily communicant and supporter of Opus Dei, have betrayed his nation so coolly? How could he have betrayed his unsuspecting wife by posting highly embellished accounts of their sex life on websites and sharing videos of their intimacies with his closest friend? How could he have taken up with a crack-head stripper, buying her a Mercedes and escorting her on a jaunt to Hong Kong, all the while not having sex with her but attempting to bring her into the Church? These questions only serve to beget more questions. Was Hanssen a monster of deception using his religion and family as blinds to disguise his treachery? Is he a schizophrenic capable of hermetically compartmentalizing different parts of his personality? Ray does not offer a final answer. Instead, he's settled for an extremely partial view of the case.

Although there are several books and countless articles on Hanssen, Ray has relied on one source: Eric O'Neill. O'Neill, played by Ryan Phillippe, was an FBI clerk trying to rise to the status of an agent when he was chosen by the Bureau to monitor Hanssen. O'Neill's FBI handler dissembled, telling him that the Bureau needed to know whether Hanssen was indulging in bizarre sexual interests that could make him susceptible to blackmail. Only late in the game did O'Neill learn that he was doing mole reconnaissance.

Why Ray has chosen to view Hanssen's career through this narrow window puzzles me. Although O'Neill did get close to Hanssen in his final months at the FBI, there is so much more to this story, including the findings of the reportedly 500-man investigatory team working to establish evidence of his crimes. Why, then, is the film so tightly focused? We see almost nothing of Hanssen making contact with Russian agents. Further, for a contemporary movie, there is shockingly little of Hanssen's sexual indiscretions. Instead of strippers shrieking "Whoopee, boys!" at the infamous Good Guy Bar in Washington, D.C., we are shown nothing more prurient than some grainy, almost indecipherable clips from the videos he took of himself making love to his wife.

Only the Catholic angle remains. Ray has ordered Cooper to play Hanssen as a creepy religious fanatic who, given the slightest opportunity, lectures associates on the need to put God in their lives. He explains to O'Neill, a cradle Catholic, that his own faith is so intense because he's a convert from Lutheranism, courtesy of his beloved wife, Bonnie. "She saved me," he confides. Insisting that O'Neill and his wife accompany Bonnie and him to Mass, he takes them back to his home, where he teasingly reprimands O'Neill for not fattening up his spouse so she can produce some babies, a remark that visibly offends the primly modern Mrs. O'Neill. He even takes O'Neill along when he goes to weekday Mass and afterward opines that the Soviets will never prevail over the West because they lack faith. Each of these scenes portrays Hanssen not as a hypocrite but as a crank. After a while, I began to wonder whether Ray thought Hanssen guilty of spying or of practicing Catholicism. The *pièce de résistance* comes when Hanssen enters his bedroom to find Bonnie kneeling at the end of their bed, saying the rosary. He sits on the bed watching her, a clearly lustful gleam in his eye. She responds in kind once she blesses herself. Granted, Hanssen is a strange bird, but that's not what this scene is about. It is clearly designed to suggest there is something inherently deviant in Catholic sexual practices. Bulletin to Ray and his writers: Catholics do not see any contradiction between their faith and their sexual enjoyment. In fact, the last time I checked, the Church encourages hearty intimacies in the cause of love and fecundity, although it does draw the line at sharing them on the internet.

To be fair, Hanssen did behave as dramatized. And no one disputes that he harbored an unholy mix of religiosity and treachery. As such, this enigma betrayed not only his country and his family but also his Church.

In the film's closing scene, the captured Hanssen asks O'Neill to pray for him. I guess we all should do so as well. And for his family and all those he injured. Before the Bureau finally caught on to him, Hanssen had for a while been appointed to unearth the mole who was himself, an assignment that gave him great pleasure. Maybe he will continue this search for himself by other means and finally find some redemption while serving his life sentence at the United States Penitentiary Administrative Maximum Facility in Florence, Colorado.

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by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

The Great Unrest

Bro. Billy Joe had been correct, Héctor reflected bitterly: Abdul Agha and the Crusade for Souls were a nationwide story all right, though everyone tried to pretend it was nothing more than a curious local phenomenon. From the start, the New Mexico media had sought the appropriate tone in reference to a "certain unrest" in Valencia County, and their colleagues across the country had followed suit. As far as Héctor Villa was concerned, the business merely amounted to the Crusades all over again.

Once the contents have been safely removed, a machine shed, unlike a cathedral, doesn't offer a great deal to damage. Bradford's barn remained largely intact after the attack, save for a few dents in the galvanized sheeting and the scorched places on the concrete floor where the barbecue grills had been overturned. Fortunately, the Muslims had been routed by the furious Christians before they could utilize the propane canisters as suicide bombs, so no one was very much hurt beyond a few bruisings and some pulled hair. Still, the psychological trauma produced by the assault was enormous. The Moorish chieftains had been identified and arrested, including the blind cleric, Abdul's father, who had directed the attack from the safety of a new Hummer parked across the road. (The vehicle, loaded with firearms, had, according to police reports, been stolen from a driveway in Corrales a couple of weeks before.) Of the six or seven ringleaders, only two were found to be residents of Belen, the others being recruits from Santa Fe, Albuquerque, and El Paso. The revelations profoundly shocked the Rio Abajo communities, which had not suspected that the valley had become a corridor for international terrorism. AveMaría took to her bed for nearly twenty-four hours after the FBI office in Albuquerque announced that the senior Agha had been a member of the Taliban in his native land before the State Department granted his extended family refugee status and admitted them all to the United States within months of U.S. forces commencing hostilities in Afghanistan late in 2001. Among the other masterminds of what a reactionary congressman from Colorado was describing as "*Jihad* on the Rio," three had been granted visas to promote Islam as a "religion of peace" in America; one held an expired student visa (Middle Eastern Studies at Michigan State); and a fifth was a chemistry student from Pakistan on scholarship at the University of New Mexico. (Grave though the situation was, an un-Christian minority had been unable to refrain from gentle mockery of the First Assembly of God Church and Bro. Billy Joe.)

Despite attempts by politicians and the media to downplay the religious confrontation, tension in Belen, as in other towns along the river, was palpable. When, barely a week later, a car parked on an Albuquerque street exploded at the curbside, the incident was widely rumored to have been a car bombing, although the city police attributed it to rivalry among Mexican gangs. Police stations in the region were swamped with reports of gratuitous insults offered to men wearing turbans and women in burnooses, and Abdul's father's mosque was defaced by an enormous drawing of a pig executed in pink spray-paint. At the same time, from around the United States, Islamist sympathizers weighed in with their comments and imprecations. In the circumstances, the juvenile court felt obliged to transfer Contracepción from the mosque to the local chapter of the Darfur Relief Society International for the remainder of her sentence, where even there no one was particularly polite to her. (The *Albuquerque Journal*, in a lengthy investigative story, had recently identified the Muhammad-in-Alcohol as the effective cause of the "unrest," making sure to mention by name all those involved in the scandal.)

Héctor, while taking care to leave his own sentiments unexpressed, could not help but feel vindicated by the events unfolding from his wife's determination that their daughter should have a boyfriend at whatever cost. AveMaría, for her part, seemed to have forgotten entirely both her romantic hopes for Contracepción and Abdul Agha and the role she'd played in fomenting *jihad*, in her relief at the Villas' narrow escape from terrorism and her fear that a terror campaign was coming to New Mexico. "*Panchito*," she often implored her husband, "perhaps, after all, we should go home to Namiquipa! Méjico is a poor country, yes, but it is not an unlucky one, it is not *maldita*, like El Norte! First, the Trade Towers, now Bradford's machine shed! O *Panchito*, if we remain here in Belen, we may all be martyred, every one! Perhaps I should visit the *adivina* in Magdalena, and ask for her advice?" (To this plea, Héctor always replied steadfastly that President Bush had a strategy for victory against terror, at home as well as in Afghanistan and Iraq, where the terrorists were in their final throes, as he knew from watching Vice President Cheney on TV, and law-abiding Americans had nothing to fear.) As for Contracepción, her grief at losing Abdul was nothing compared with the humiliation she suffered on account of Kathleen O'Malley, who was frequently seen joy-riding around town nowadays in Abdul's tomato-colored Dodge and whose father was said to be preparing to apply the military skills he'd acquired during the Troubles in Northern Ireland to the coming Christian-Muslim wars in New Mexico.

Bro. Billy Joe had rescheduled the remaining meetings of the Crusade for Souls, so Héctor was free in the days following the Battle of the Machine Shed to spend evenings at the Taberna Aztlán in the company of Jesús "Eddie" Juárez, after AveMaría had taken an Ambien and retired early with Dubya asleep in Héctor's place beside her in the bed. Jesús "Eddie," Héctor had always suspected, was at best a nominal Christian who attended Mass only to maintain the peace at home and whose real interest were the bingo games on Saturday evenings and Sunday afternoons in the basement of Our Lady of Belen. Thus Héctor was quite unprepared to learn his friend's sentiments regarding *Ji-*

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had on the Rio and astonished by the violence with which he expressed them.

"The goddamn Islamists," Jesús "Eddie" brooded over his sixth or seventh beer as they sat at their regular table watching the ten o'clock news. "They're heretics, *hombre*—say it was Muhammad that was crucified, not Jesus Christ at all! Not even the goddamn Anglo Protestants believe *that*."

Héctor did his best not to feel offended. "Not all Protestants are Anglos," he reminded Jesús "Eddie" mildly.

Jesús "Eddie" smiled tolerantly. He felt good and was prepared to take an ecumenical view of things, being secretly pleased that Contracep had broken up with the raghead kid and was back on the meat market again.

"The worst thing about Protestants ain't they hate the Pope, it's that they're mostly Anglos," he conceded generously.

"*I* don't hate the Pope," Héctor told him. "President Bush and Laura flew all the way to the funeral in Rome last year, remember?"

"That's because Bush wants the Hispanics all to vote for him. Some of them did, maybe, but not me, *hermano*. I'd rather die than vote for the goddamn Republicans! 'Cause, you know what? *They're* all Anglo, too!"

Héctor saw the conversation was going nowhere. "Well, the thing you have to admit about Protestants and Republicans is, at least they're not Islamists, anyway!"

"That's true, that's true . . ." Thoughtfully, Jesús "Eddie" aimed the neck of his beer bottle at his epiglottis. Then he set the empty bottle down with a bang on the table. "Wish one of them teetotaling skybutts would walk in here to*night*," he added. "I'd hold him down and force-feed him a coupla *beers*, for the fun of it!"

Having unbosomed himself of this sentiment, Jesús "Eddie" remained silent until the bartender had brought two frosty new bottles and gone away again. Then he said in a conspiratorial voice, leaning across the table, "Com*padre*—How about we start a crusade of our own, you hear what I'm saying to you?"

Héctor's first thought was that his friend must be joking. "You think it would do any good?" he asked doubtfully.

"*Hom*bre, how could we lose? We shoot at them, we kill a few, the rest blow themselves up—*boom-boom*!—just like in Iraq!"

Héctor understood that his friend, very far from jesting, was in dead earnest. "But that would be, like, war," he protested. "You can't just decide you want to kill people for whatever reason and then go out and start doing it—only the President of the United States can do that!"

"They started it!" Jesús "Eddie's" muddy eyes glowed with the light of religious enthusiasm. "Guy was telling me the other day, this is the first time the Rio Abajo's been invaded since the Civil *War*! Said he got it out of a book, somewheres—I don't know. These Islamists got no rights in a democratic country. Hell, it'd be like shooting a pack of coyotes—*rabid* coyotes! I tell you, *compadrito*: Everbody—the cops, the FBI, the President of the United States—why, they'd all be looking the other way while it was going on and give us a medal after it was over!"

Héctor was profoundly shocked. He felt deeply disappointed in his good friend Jesús "Eddie." "AveMaría wouldn't go along with any such thing," he said firmly, "and I don't think President Bush would, either. He believes in the civil rights of all Americans. And he thinks Islam is a religion of peace and tolerance. Anyway, this isn't Mexico, remember. Pancho Villa wouldn't have stood a chance, trying to get away with all he did up here."

"This is Nuevo México—not Mexico or America, neither one! In the Rio Abajo, we do things our way, *hermano*—ever since Coronado and the Camino Real. What do you think he'd have done with a bunch of ragheads? Same thing he done with the f--king Pueblos, that's what!"

Héctor understood that Jesús "Eddie," who ordinarily held his liquor fairly well, must have taken a few shots of rye with his beer earlier in the evening. Around the age of ten or twelve, he'd learned from dealing with his Uncle Rafael not to converse with drunks except when necessary, and never to try to reason with them. He determined to keep his mouth shut while nursing his own drink and awaiting the chance to make a diplomatic departure.

Héctor was preparing to ask the barman for his tab when a small white car like a breadbox on wheels pulled off Route 47 into Taberna Aztlán's lot and parked directly in front of the window where he and Jesús "Eddie" sat watching. The front doors of the vehicle opened simultaneously, and two men stepped out, one on either side. They were small, lean, dark-skinned men wearing trimmed black beards and turbans that glowed like ivory in the outdoor lights. With almost military precision, the two snatched the turbans from their heads, rolled them up, and stuffed them deep into the pockets of their long, dark coats. One of the men looked familiar, Héctor thought.

"Did you see that, *hombre*?" Jesús "Eddie" demanded. "Them towelheads are coming in here!"

They appeared in the doorway seconds later and paused there, looking carefully about as if casing the joint. Then they scuttled like rats to a shadowed corner of the room and seated themselves in darkness at a table for two.

"Can you be*lieve* it?" Jesús-"Eddie" hissed. "You think they could be jack Muslims—walking into a bar just like that?"

The barman took their order and returned with the drinks. Héctor couldn't tell for certain what they were drinking: He guessed Tequila Sunrises. He was still trying to recall where he recognized the familiar-looking one from. There were so many Islamists on the Rio Grande these days.

Jesús "Eddie" swept his half-finished beer aside with the side of his hand. "Come on, *compadrito*. The Crusade is about to begin—right here and now!"

The last time Héctor had been in a fistfight was in elementary school, when Adán Romero challenged him after he'd caught Lolita Sanchez giving him a kiss on the playground at lunchtime and he'd been forced to accept in order to save face before a woman.

"Suppose we just leave," he suggested nervously. "We make any trouble, the barman might not let us in here again." The familiar *typo*, he'd realized in that instant, had been one of the jihadists attacking the machine barn.

"We *are* leaving," Jesús "Eddie" whispered. "Put your coat on now, and we'll pay up on the way out."

The light from the windows of the Taberna Aztlán fell just short of the front ends of the cars aligned in the parking area along the concrete stops. Moving stealthily and in a crouched position, Jesús "Eddie" approached the breadbox from behind and went round it, letting the air out of the tires one after the other. When he'd finished, he tucked a paper bar napkin under the wiper-blade on the driver's side. On the napkin, Jesús "Eddie" had written with a red felt-tip pen: CRUSIFY THE MUSLIM DOGS!!!

"There," he remarked in a satisfied voice. "Those f--king camel jockeys will know we mean business, all right, when they come out later and get a load of *that*."

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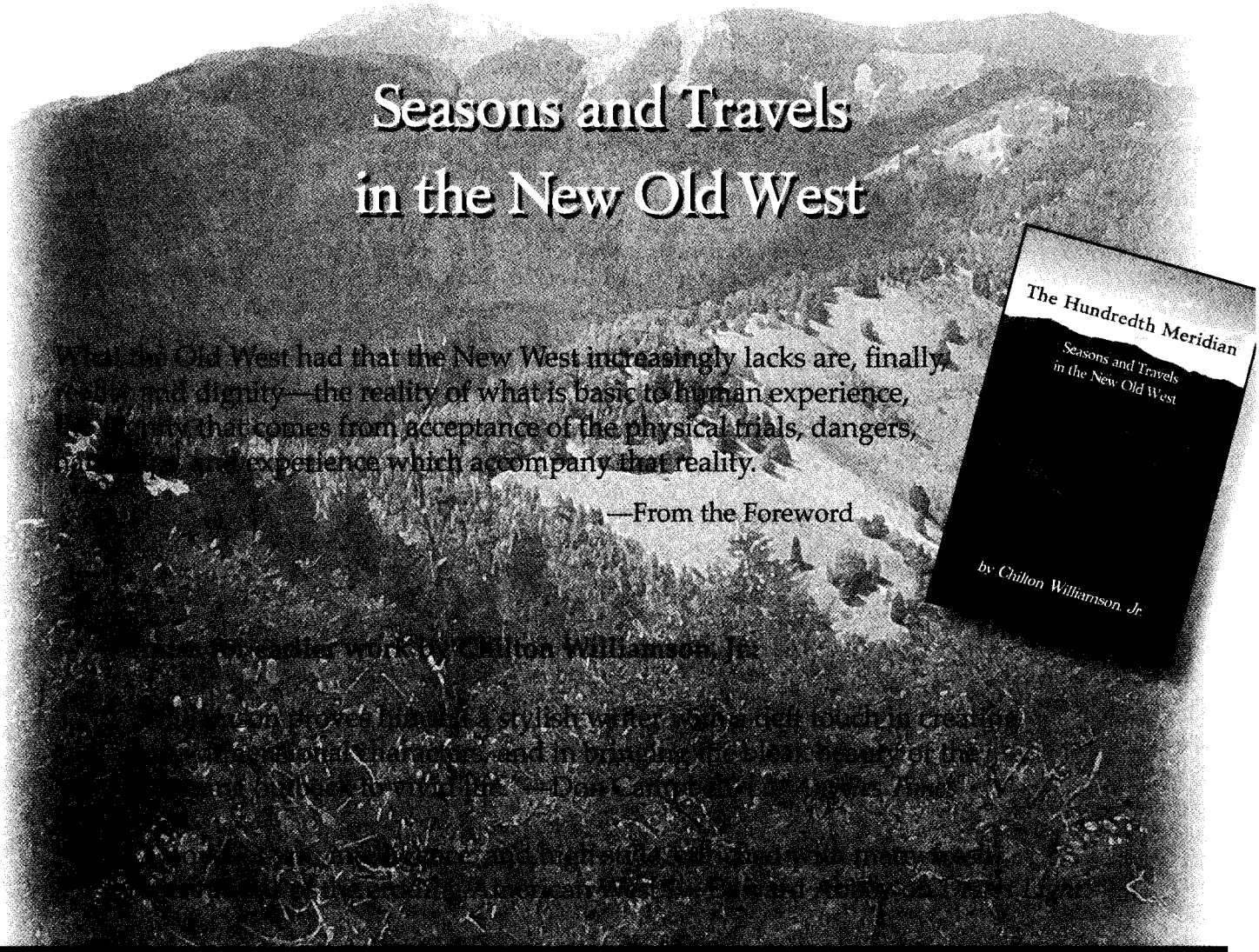
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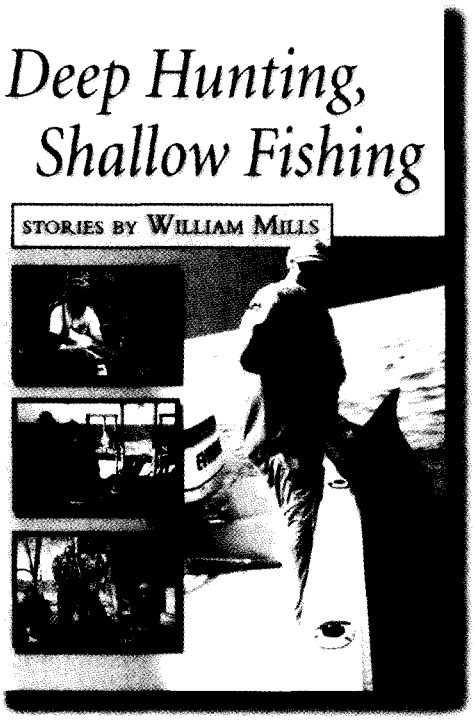

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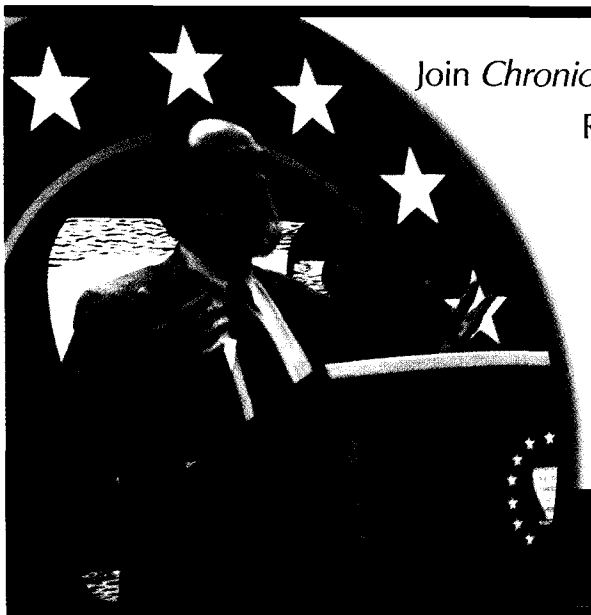

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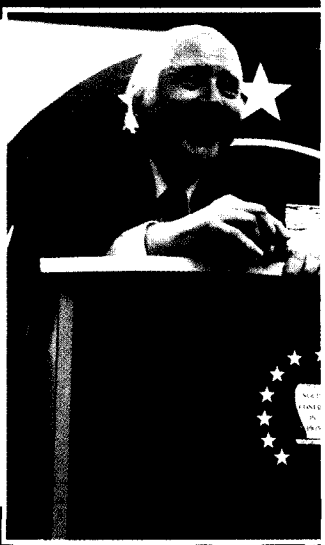

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